

Media Literacy for Beginners



A teaching resource by Cary Bazalgette and Marion Janner



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Introduction: Why teach media literacy?

Switch On! is designed to support education for media literacy, and is aimed particularly at professionals teaching or caring for people with learning disabilities. Much of the material in this resource is designed to support informal learning in a wide variety of contexts. But the resource is also designed to help teachers preparing learners for the National Open College Network (NOCN) Entry Level Awards in Media Literacy at Entry Level 3 (for details see www.nocn.org.uk/qualifications/qcf-qualifications).

The media are such an important aspect of everyone's lives that understanding them better, and being able to criticise them, is empowering as well as enjoyable. People with learning disabilities watch more television, and films on DVD, than other people, so this resource concentrates mainly on moving image media. By developing their skills in analysing and evaluating moving image media, people with learning disabilities can become more adept at a key aspect of literacy in the twenty-first century: media literacy.

Media literacy is defined by Ofcom as 'the ability to access, understand and create communications in a variety of contexts'. The Charter for Media Literacy (www.euromedialiteracy.eu) describes seven key competences for media literacy. By expanding on the Charter versions and adding examples, we can offer the following overall learning objectives for the kinds of learner that *Switch On!* is aimed at, whether or not they are aiming for a qualification in media literacy.

Media literate people –

1. Are able to find out about and **use media technologies** in order to access things they want to see and hear, store material they want to keep - and find it again - and to share material with other people. This could mean that learners become able to do some or all of the following:
 - find the programme or channel they want on radio or TV;
 - record what they want to see or hear;
 - use a CD player or MP3 player to listen to music;
 - use a DVD player and select favourite scenes or 'extras' from a menu;
 - use a mobile phone to text and call other people;
 - use a mobile phone to take photos and send them to others;
 - take short video sequences on a mobile and show them to others;
 - use a digital camera to take photos;
 - download photos to a computer;
 - use software to file photos, find them again and show them to others;
 - use a computer to access the Internet, and use a search engine to find out things they want to know;
 - find and download favourite music to an MP3 player;
 - use a camcorder to film scenes;
 - use software to edit moving images and sounds.

The point of being able to do these things is to enhance people's individual enjoyment and understanding of the media, and also to extend their capacity to share ideas, feelings and information with others in their family and community.

2. Can find different kinds of media content (eg films, TV programmes, music) from various sources and **make their own choices** about what they find enjoyable or interesting. This may lead to being more adventurous and confident about trying out different kinds of media experience: different genres or styles of film, for example, or TV programmes with unfamiliar presenters or content.

3. **Understand that media content is produced** by people and institutions: that it does not just 'arrive' but is made on purpose. Media literate people also have some knowledge of **how** films, TV programmes, news broadcasts, advertisements etc are made, and **why** the people who make them choose to make them in a certain way, or choose some subjects and not others.
4. Know how to **identify some of the techniques** used by the media and be able to **talk about why they are used** and what they can mean. This could include being able to
 - Identify a close-up or a special effect in a film and talk about why it was used and how it affected their interpretation of the scene;
 - Identify a camera angle in an advertisement and talk about how it might affect people's opinion of the product;
 - Describe the music used in a creepy film sequence and explain how it added to the atmosphere.

Media literate people have also acquired analytical tools to help them understand and talk about the media: for example, knowing how to look at everything in a film scene and think about why it has been put there, or whether to believe the impression given by an advertisement.

2. Be able to **use media technologies** (eg phones, cameras) themselves **in a creative way** in order to express and communicate their own ideas and to share information with others. This could range from being able to plan and perform an expression or movement for a photo or video scene being taken by others, to making their own choices about how to edit a moving image sequence, adding music and sound effects to enhance the meaning.
3. Be able to **identify things they find offensive or harmful** in the media, and to avoid them, and know how, and to whom, to complain about unsuitable content. This would include being able to
 - express their feelings and explain what it was about the film or programme that was upsetting or annoying;
 - understand how and why other people might be upset by certain content; or that some might be upset and some not;
 - identify other films or programmes likely to contain similar content, and avoid them, or ask others to help them to do so;
 - phone or write to complain to the media company concerned, or to a regulator.
4. Be able to **use media as a citizen**, eg to participate in online surveys and telephone voting, and to find out information about local and national politics from the media. This could also include being able to make, or help make media - from a blog to a video - to express the point of view of a group or community.

How to use this resource

Switch On! is designed to be taught by people who have no background in media studies, working either in formal settings such as FE Colleges, or in informal settings such as day centres. However, it is unwise to embark on media teaching with just your common sense to help you. Many of the ideas and approaches in media teaching run counter to common sense and to popular assumptions about how the media work and the effects they may have on people. So you are advised to read the introductory section, **Key Issues for Teaching**, which will provide you with some ideas to help you respond to issues that may arise in informal discussion, and to explore these with learners. These issues are summarised in table form on page 12.

It is also important to focus first of all on **Teaching Topic 1: Introduction to Media Languages**. This supports the mandatory unit of the same title in the NOCN Media Literacy Entry Level Award, but many of the suggested activities here are accessible to learners of different abilities and will form a good basis for any further exploration of the media.

Teaching Topics 2 and 3 are also intended to be of interest to all learners. **Introduction to Recognising Modality** may sound daunting but it is simply concerned with questions about what is meant to be 'real' in the media, and what is not – and about how to tell the difference. So this is of particular importance and relevance for many people with learning disabilities, who may feel uncertain about how to make such judgments and may welcome the chance to explore the differences between 'real' and 'make-believe'. **Introduction to Recognising Genre** may also seem like a challenging topic, but in fact most of us share the pleasures and 'rules' of different genres such as soap opera or horror films. People with learning disabilities may have particularly strong loyalties to specific genres and enjoy exploring their characteristics with others.

Teaching Topics 4, 5 and 6 all deal with more specialised aspects of the media: News, Advertising and Representation. Some learners may find these topics difficult; for example ASD learners can find it hard to imagine other people's point of view or motivation, and would thus have problems with some of the activities. In informal settings therefore, you don't have to use all of the teaching topics, or teach them in this order; it's a good idea to follow your learners' interests and concerns. Nor do you have to do all the work in any one topic; if you feel that learners have got the point and don't need to spend more time on it, move on. Alternatively, doing more than one of the activities can also be helpful to reinforce learning. There may be activities you want to repeat, perhaps with a time interval, to consolidate particular learning.

The timings of the Activities are indicative and will vary widely according to the abilities and support needs of learners. The topics that have a lot of activities are not more difficult than the shorter ones. In fact the longer topics each offer several alternative, mainly shorter, activities, while the activities in Topics 4, 5 and 6 are likely to be found more challenging.

The **Glossary** is there for you to refer to, not as something you need to teach. Words that appear in the Glossary are highlighted in the text the first time they appear, but the Glossary also includes a number of other terms that you may find useful when discussing and analysing media with your learners.

Many of the activities involve using film or TV material, for which you will need access to a computer or DVD player, and a TV set or a data projector and screen, so that learners can watch the material and discuss it. Where possible the resource indicates online sources of such material; in other cases you should be able to access suitable content from commercial DVDs. Bear in mind the requirements of copyright law and do not encourage your learners to download and keep copyright material from the Internet or from DVDs. However, the Copyright Designs and Patents Act of 1988 allows you, if you are a teacher employed in a recognised educational institution, to download and copy moving image material for the purposes of instruction in a course of study.

Key Issues for Teaching

If you are new to teaching about the media, you need to read through this section in order to inform your planning, as well as to guide your pedagogy. The section is structured around nine questions, which all deal with the ways in which you as a teacher or facilitator, and your learners as learners, may initially think about **moving image media**. The first two questions address your own overall approach; the other seven deal with issues that learners are likely to raise, focusing on key uncertainties that may make media teaching difficult. In each case therefore, ways of addressing these uncertainties are offered, and potential learning objectives are signalled. The nine issues thus raised are summarised in a table on page 10.

1) Are the media a good or bad influence?

There is a lot of public debate about the alleged influences of the media and you may be particularly aware of the problems experienced by people with learning disabilities in trying to understand and interpret what they see and hear in films and on TV. It's often assumed that media literacy is mostly about defending learners from the 'bad effects' of the media. But in using *Switch On!* It is important to bear in mind the reasons why people enjoy the media. People for whom the media are an important part of their lives - which includes most people with learning disabilities - do not want to have these pleasures undermined or treated with disrespect. The media can:

- give us something to share with friends and other people;
- give us a feeling of having relationships in a way we can usually only have with the people we know best, such as our families;
- help us to understand feelings better by seeing how other people feel in different situations, including finding out about people's private lives and feelings;
- show us the lives of people very different from ourselves;
- give us a chance to feel we're escaping; bring colour and excitement to our lives if they are difficult or just boring;
- make us more creative - better at coming up with new ideas about things to think about or make;
- give us a sense of time, during the day and the week;
- offer role models: people we like, admire or want to be like, including celebrities.

So although much of the work in this resource deals with the ways in which the media may offer misleading or upsetting material, your overall approach should remain focused on enabling learners not only to understand the media better, but also to enjoy them more, and perhaps to choose a wider range of films and programmes to watch.

2) How do I help learners watch and respond to film and TV in the classroom?

Most teachers find it quite daunting to show film and TV material to learners and to discuss it in the classroom. Many of the activities in this resource involve watching short extracts very closely and carefully, using the 'pause' facility. You should encourage learners to:

- observe carefully what they can see and hear;
- make comparisons with their own experiences;
- make comparisons between what they see on screen, and real objects;
- describe scenes or processes that they have seen;
- express their opinions.

When undertaking detailed analysis like this, try to follow these rules:

- Use VERY SHORT extracts – no more than two minutes– 30 seconds can be plenty;
- Preview any viewing material carefully;
- Show extracts more than once, using the pause facility to stop for discussion;

- Make sure that the equipment is working properly, that you can show material at once without having to fiddle with the equipment, and that you have technical support available;
- Make sure the learners are sitting comfortably and that they can all see the screen and hear the sound.

When showing a complete film or programme, you may find the following open questions useful for eliciting initial responses afterwards:

- Was there anything you liked?
- What caught your attention?
- Was there anything you disliked?
- Was there anything that puzzled you, or that you'd never seen in a film/TV programme before?
- Did you notice any patterns?

3) Do TV and films affect our feelings and moods?

Learners may approach TV and film with very fixed attitudes embedded in their emotional responses. It can be useful to help learners reflect on these responses and 'open them up'. Comments such as:

'It was really sad.'
'I hate him!'
'I laughed until I cried.'

- suggest an emotional reaction to a film or programme. To explore this aspect of media viewing, follow up with questions such as:

'Did you still feel sad later that evening/the next day?'
'Do you hate the actor, or is it the character he plays that you hate?'
'Did everyone else laugh as much as you?'
'Would you like to see that programme/film again? Why?'

Outcome: move learners towards recognising that media can affect your mood, but also seeing that the effect may be more, or less, long-term; also, that different people respond in different ways to the same material.

4) Do TV and films affect our thoughts and actions?

Many people believe that the media have effects on people's behaviour, but they usually relate this to other people's behaviour rather than their own. It can be useful to encourage reflection on where ideas and opinions come from. During discussion, phrases such as:

'That's terrible!'
'I'd never do that!'
'It made me want to...',
'I never knew...'

- indicate that a new thought or impression has arisen and it's valuable to probe a bit further with questions such as:

'So does that make you feel differently about...?'
'Do you think there's anything you can do to influence...?'
'Will you behave differently next time you...?'

This will encourage learners to think about how much what they see on TV and in films influences their thoughts, opinions and actions.

Outcome: learners will move towards an understanding that film and TV can inform them and may influence their ideas and actions; but that there are many other factors involved in opinion-forming and their decisions to act or think differently.

5) Do we all like the same films or programmes?

Cultural preferences can be closely tied up with personal identity, and may be used as social tools to include or exclude people from groups. It is important to foster the realisation that people like and dislike different things, and have reasons for doing so. Learners can be encouraged to go beyond:

‘Ugh, I couldn’t watch that!’
‘That was boring.’
‘I hate that sort of programme.’

- to understanding that there are other audiences out there who might feel differently, and thinking about why. Asking questions such as:

‘Who might like this film? Can you think why?’
‘Do you think men might like it better than women?’
‘Would older people enjoy this programme?’

- will help learners to see the variety of audiences being catered for.

Outcome: learners are taken beyond their own initial reactions, to understand and respect other people’s tastes and opinions.

6) If you can see it, must it be true?

The commonplace belief that ‘a picture can’t lie’ is an important one to discuss. If possible, using a relevant short extract from a film or TV programme, you can explore such questions as:

‘Did he really...
... jump off the cliff?
... burn up in the fire?
... hit her that hard?’

This will lead learners towards understanding that you don’t simply have to accept what you see at face value, but can analyse how it has been presented to you and what effect the director was trying to achieve. This, in turn, is a useful lead-in to beginning to understand that moving image media have a ‘language’ and that it is possible to learn it. From here, you could start to draw attention to the role that types of **shot**, **framing**, **sound**, and so on play in affecting what is ‘seen’. If you’re not familiar with media terminology yourself, see the Glossary on page 71.

Outcome: learners begin to realise that what they see is not necessarily literally real or true, and that there are many aspects to the art of creating moving image media.

7) Can you like part of a programme or film but not all of it?

As learners learn to discuss moving image media in more thoughtful terms than, ‘I liked/didn’t like it’, and start to understand some of the complexity of media constructions, they will come to appreciate the different elements involved such as performances, script, **images**, music, different characters and different stages in the narrative. From there, they can begin to consider them separately, or in various combinations, and express opinions about diverse elements of the work.

Outcome: learners will gradually realise that they can judge independently different elements of a media product; and that it's possible to like some parts and not others.

8) Is a programme or film bad if it shows bad things?

Discussion of this point will be critical, usually when viewing the news or a documentary, when comments such as:

'That's racist/sexist.'
'Ugh, that's disgusting!'
'They shouldn't be allowed to do that.'

- are expressed. Learners need to be led to the understanding that moving media which show bad or ugly things are not bad in themselves. In fact, they are often made with the best motives: to expose bad things in the world, in the hope of improving them. You can ask:

'Why was the bad/horrible thing in the programme?'
'How did the reporter sound or look while talking about the news item?'
'How do you feel the reporter felt about the news item?'

The following questions provide thoughtful discussion if raised when an appropriate film or news item is viewed:

'Is it ever OK to show sad things that happen to people and laugh about them?' (what about in comedy shows?)
'Is it reasonable to show people who are really upset and who haven't been asked whether they want to be filmed?'
'What about having someone on a programme who has very bad (racist, for example) ideas?'
'Is it more acceptable if the opposite opinion is also represented?'
'Is it better to allow a short time for the bad opinion and longer for the opposite opinion?'

Outcome: it should become clear to learners that, in fact, a film showing bad things should be judged for quality by the same standards as any other film. They will come to understand that bad things may be shown for good reasons. They should be able to distinguish the opinions expressed by people in a film from the opinions of the filmmakers.

9) Did we get the whole story?

This question is most likely to arise in regard to news, information programmes and documentary films. It is likely to come from discussions about 'what actually happened'. Learners may have very fixed ideas about what a programme meant. A good way of resolving an impasse is to get learners thinking about what *wasn't* said or shown:

'Was there another side to the story, do you think?'
'Can you see another point of view that could have been represented?'
'Were there some unanswered questions at the end? If so, why?'

This can lead to an understanding that moving image media are made by people who activity choices and have reasons and/or motives (which may be practical, financial, ethical, political etc) for doing so.

Outcome: learners realise that what is *not* shown can be as important as what is shown, and that they need to consider for themselves what has been missed out. They come to understand that moving image media, including 'real-life' news and documentaries, are not neutral - people have chosen to include and omit material, and have made decisions about how to present it - and there are reasons behind all these choices.

SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES FOR TEACHING

KEY ISSUE	LEARNING OUTCOME	<i>Switch On!</i> LINKS
Your own attitude to the media.	Bear in mind that the media are likely to be very important in learners' lives; that they may have strong media preferences, and that the aim of media literacy is to enhance enjoyment and understanding as well as to develop critical skills.	
Your own concerns about how to handle moving image media in the classroom.	Use short extracts for close study. Preview carefully; use pause facility; view more than once. Ask open questions so as not to prompt predictable responses.	Use the Glossary (p71) to find technical terms for analysis and discussion.
Learners' emotional responses to media.	The media can affect mood, but effects can vary over time and between people.	TT2 Introduction to Recognising Modality (p21) and Introduction to Using the Media (p63).
Learners' concerns about how the media can affect behaviour.	The media can affect behaviour but this is not automatic and there are many other factors to take into account.	TT2 Introduction to Recognising Modality (p21) and TT6 Introduction to Understanding Representation (p57).
Differences between personal preferences.	Understand and respect other people's tastes and opinions.	TT3 Introduction to Recognising Genre (p31).
Believing what you can see.	What you can see in the media is not necessarily real or true.	TT1 Understanding Media Languages (p13).
Disliking a whole film or programme because of one part.	Different elements of a film or TV programme can be judged independently.	TT1 Understanding Media Languages (p13).
Condemning a film or programme for showing 'bad things'.	Bad things can be shown for good reasons; distinguish the filmmakers' view from that of the characters.	TT1 Understanding Media Languages (p13) and TT6 Introduction to Understanding Representation (p57).
Failing to consider the whole story or possible omissions.	Media are not neutral: producers make choices - for reasons - about what is and is not shown.	TT1 Understanding Media Languages (p13) TT4 Introduction to Understanding News (p41) and TT5 Introduction to Understanding Advertising (p49).

Teaching Topic 1: Introduction to Media Languages

This topic supports learning towards the mandatory unit of the National Open College Network (NOCN) Entry Level Awards in Media Literacy at Entry Level 3, but even if you are not entering learners for this qualification, you should try to undertake this unit first, because it establishes some core principles of learning about the media. Seven introductory activities are offered, but you do not have to do all of them: just two or three that you think will be helpful and meaningful to your learners and that they will enjoy. Likewise, the five creative activities offer different levels of technical complexity and time commitment, so that you can choose which suits your circumstances best.

Learning Objectives

By undertaking some or all of the activities in this topic, learners should achieve the following learning objectives:

1. Understand that media products (photographs, TV programmes, films) are deliberately constructed by people (ie media producers).
2. Recognise some of the creative choices made by media producers.
3. Respond to narrative information in a media product such as a TV programme or film (eg using inference or prediction).

Rationale

This topic lies at the heart of understanding many aspects of the media. Learners need to understand that sounds and images are not simply recordings or renderings of real life, but are deliberately constructed. It is therefore possible to analyse and appreciate how they are combined, manipulated and crafted to have an effect or make a point. Some learners, especially those who have difficulty in imagining motivations or choices made by others, may find this difficult; it will be up to you to decide how much of this project they can manage.

‘Reading’ moving images, or textual analysis, means paying close attention to all the elements of a film or TV programme and thinking carefully about what it’s trying to say and the effect it’s trying to achieve. If learners can also undertake even the most basic creative activity, this can help them develop their sense of the creative choices that are available to media producers and recognise how these choices can affect meaning.

You may want to use the Glossary (page 71) if you think it will be helpful in discussing some of the techniques and conventions you are looking at, but it can be very boring for learners if you make ‘learning the vocabulary’ the main objective of this topic. You may find that some learners know and understand more about the media than you had expected them to. It will be encouraging for them to have this knowledge valued and respected.

Teaching Topic 1: ACTIVITIES

Choose at least one of the observation Activities 1-6, depending on your learners' level of ability and powers of concentration; then go on to Activity 7(p 17) and then one or more of the Creative Activities (p 18). A wide selection of introductory activities is offered here: you need only choose ones that best suit your learners and the context in which you are working. The timings here are very approximate.

ACTIVITY 1 What's outside the window? (15 - 30 minutes)

Learners take turns to look outside the window and tell others what they can see.

ACTIVITY 2 What's in the room? (15 - 30 minutes)

Learners take turns to look at the room from a particular position and tell others what they can see.

ACTIVITY 3 What's in the frame? (15 - 30 minutes)

Learners look through a framing device and describe what they can see.

ACTIVITY 4 What's it like? (15 - 30 minutes)

Learners describe an object in detail.

ACTIVITY 5 Listen to the sound! (15 - 30 minutes)

Learners listen to a sound and try to guess what action it relates to.

ACTIVITY 6 Look at the clothes! (30 - 40 minutes)

Learners look at pictures of clothes and think about the significance of different styles.

CREATIVE ACTIVITY 1 Telling stories with found pictures (40 - 60 minutes)

Learners find pictures from different sources and make a meaningful sequence.

CREATIVE ACTIVITY 2 Panoramic Animation (40 - 60 minutes)

Learners make a story by creating a sequence of pictures

CREATIVE ACTIVITY 3 Telling a Story in Images (60 - 90 minutes)

Learners make a sequence of photographs which show something happening

ACTIVITY 4 Single shot film (2 hours)

Learners create a story to be enacted in front of a fixed camera

CREATIVE ACTIVITY 5 Stop motion: Appearing and disappearing (60 minutes)

Learners create a simple 'special effect'

Resources for activities 1 - 7

Optional: cardboard **viewfinders** for Activity 3; selection of objects for Activity 4.
For Activity 7: DVD or video player, or computer with DVD player, data projector and screen. It's essential to have good sound, so use external speakers.
Pre-selected extract (2 minutes maximum) from the opening of a film or TV.

TT1 ACTIVITY 1 What's outside the window? (15 - 30 minutes)

Learners take turns to look outside the window and tell others what they can see.

Ask learners take it in turns to say what they can see through a window. They will naturally start with the most obvious things, but encourage them to keep looking and mention *everything*: cracked paving stones, puddles, leaves or litter on the road, shop and street signs, people, their clothes and what they are doing, a bird flying by and so on. The fact that the view is contained by a window frame helps learners to begin to understand that directors *choose* what to include in each scene.

TT1 ACTIVITY 2 What's in the room? (15 - 30 minutes)

Learners take turns to look at the room from a particular position and tell others what they can see.

Undertake the same observation activity as in Activity 1, but within the room, focusing on a small area - what's in one corner or on a table, for instance.

TT1 ACTIVITY 3 What's in the frame? (15 - 30 minutes)

Learners look through a framing device and describe what they can see.

Create a frame by:

- joining the thumbs and first fingers of both hands into a square;
- taking a photo with a mobile phone;
- making a cardboard viewfinder to look through.

Learners should describe **everything** - however trivial - that they can see within their frame or photograph. This begins to give learners an idea of what a cameraperson sees through their camera and should help them to understand that using a frame involves making choices about what to include and exclude.

TT1 ACTIVITY 4 What's it like? (15 - 30 minutes)

Learners describe an object in detail.

To encourage close observation, ask learners to describe something small in great detail, for example a drinks can, mentioning everything: colours, patterns, writing, shape, how it's used (the ring-pull and what happens when you pull it, for example).

TT1 ACTIVITY 5 Listen to the sound! (15 - 30 minutes)

Learners listen to a sound and try to guess what action it relates to.

Try making sounds while out of view (or have learners close their eyes) and ask learners to guess what you're doing. For example:

- **in the kitchen:** filling the kettle and turning it on; lighting the gas with a pop; chopping with a sharp knife on a chopping board; clattering the saucepans; using a timer with an alarm; rattling cutlery.
- **in a classroom:** sharpening a pencil, rubbing something out, cutting paper, scribbling with a pen.

Sound effects in moving image media and radio may not be very noticeable to the casual viewer or listener (although some people are more 'alert' to sound than others). Sounds are frequently meant to blend into the scene and seem 'natural' rather than obvious. Listening closely to sounds and talking about them will help learners to focus on sounds and to think about the choices involved in using them as part of a story.

Sound effects may be added to make a scene seem more realistic, or to help create a mood or emotion. Some can be made very simply, for example knocking on a table to sound like knocking on a door. Our familiarity with everyday sounds helps us to recognise what the sound effects suggest.

TT1 ACTIVITY 6 Look at the clothes! (30 - 40 minutes)

Learners look at pictures of clothes and think about the significance of different styles.

Bring in (or ask learners to bring) a selection of magazines (weekend supplements, women's fashion magazines, celebrity magazines, male interest magazines, for example).

Ask learners to find pictures of clothes that they would wear:

- to go out for a burger or to the local café;
- to a party;
- for a walk in the country;
- to look good in a new job.

Extend this to asking them to find clothes for other people or characters, for example:

- for the kindly grandfather in a family TV series;
- for an eccentric millionaire (male or female);
- for a pickpocket in a football crowd.

Clothes play an important part in creating an impression in moving image media. Unfamiliar clothes will attract the attention in **costume drama**, a futuristic film or some foreign films, but even the everyday clothes worn in a contemporary piece tell us something about the characters wearing them. Noticing and appreciating clothes in films and TV programmes can be a great pleasure.

TT1 ACTIVITY 7 A first analysis (30 - 40 minutes)

Learners view and discuss a film or TV extract.

Once learners have got the idea of close observation, introduce them to a short extract from the start of a fiction film or TV drama programme and get them to apply their observational skills to watching it, in order to make a first analysis of what its likely content, theme, mood, **genre** and audience will be.

Show the first few minutes of the film or programme (the **title sequence** and perhaps two minutes beyond). Then show it again, this time asking the following questions, using the prompts below as necessary.

What sort of film is it going to be?

- **Music:** is it serious or fun? Classical or pop? Gentle and relaxing or pounding and exciting?
- **Title sequence:** what images are used to illustrate the title? Are they pictures of real places, people or things, or are they animated? Or are they a mix of the two? Do the images move or is it a sequence of still images?
- **Graphics:** Do the words of the title appear in an eye-catching way? What sort of lettering is used?

What's the mood of the film?

- What feelings does the start of the film suggest?
- For example is there a light, humorous feel or is it ominous and scary, or is there a natural, everyday atmosphere?
- What things contribute to this mood? You could consider music, sounds, colour, **camera movement**, as well as what you can actually see on screen.

What sort of people will want to watch it?

From what you see and hear, can you tell if the film will appeal to

- Children or adults?
- Men or women?
- People with a particular interest (cars or cooking, for instance)?
- Or could it appeal to anybody?

What time of day/season of the year is it set in?

You could encourage learners to look for things like:

- **Light:** sunlight, moonlight, lights on inside the house, streetlights turned on, car headlights on.
- **Sounds:** cars honking horns, sirens wailing, owls hooting, silence.
- **Activities:** working in an office, running in the park, sleeping, watching TV.
- **Clocks or watches** shown on-screen.
- **Clues to the season** in weather or nature (snow, rain, bright sunlight, new green leaves or bare trees); or in people's clothes, or activities; or it may not be significant at all, for example in a story set on another planet or entirely within an office building.

Is it in the past or the present?

You could encourage learners to look at things like:

- Clothes and hairstyles.
- How people speak: their accents, phrases they use.
- Means of transport: whether there are cars, buses, trains, bicycles, and what they look like; or there may be horses, wagons or space ships.
- Shops - what they look like and what they are selling.
- Homes and interiors: what's the furniture and decoration like; is there a television and other modern machinery?

Teaching Topic1: Creative Activities

One or more of these five Activities could be undertaken at any point after you have done the observation activities. These five activities underpin the learning objectives of this topic by helping learners to develop their understanding about the kinds of choices open to filmmakers, involving not only what is shown, but also where the camera is positioned, and how sound and music can contribute to meaning. You could use PowerPoint or Photo Story software to present the outcomes of Activity 3, and you could add some sound effects and/or music to the outcomes of Activities 4 and 5, so that learners can reflect on what they have done and its effect on others. The activities are presented in order of increasing complexity. The timings are a very rough guide. Some learners may take much longer to complete the activities.

Resources for Creative Activities:

Newspapers and magazines, card, scissors, glue (for Activity 1)
Long strips of card (10 cm x 80 cm), pencils and crayons or markers (for Activity 2)
Cardboard frame or box with cut out window (for Activity 2)
Digital still camera(s) (for Activity 3)
Software for presentation (eg PowerPoint or Photo Story (for Activity 3)
Video camera, mobile phone camera or webcam (for Activities 4 and 5)
Computer, and data projector with screen for viewing still and moving images
Tripod to hold camera so that learners can discuss positioning; or camera linked to computer for the same purpose (for Activities 4 and 5, and possibly 3).

TT1 CREATIVE ACTIVITY 1 Telling stories with found pictures (40 - 60 minutes)

Learners find pictures from different sources and make a meaningful sequence.

Make a selection of different images from magazines, the web, art books etc, showing objects, people, animals, scenes and possibly pictures of the learners themselves.

Learners (working in pairs or groups of three) select 5 or 6 images and put them in a sequence to tell a story. The aim is to show the way our minds try to make sense of different images in sequence. Learners plan and present the story to the rest of the group. These could be told verbally, drawn, scanned and projected, or cut out and stuck in sequence. Discuss how the story could change by changing the order of the sequence, and what sounds and/or music would help tell the story better.

TT1 CREATIVE ACTIVITY 2 Panoramic Animation (40 - 60 minutes)

Learners make a story by creating a sequence of pictures.

Using long strips of card (about 10 cm x 80 cm) get learners to draw/ collage/ paint a narrative strip, made up of images that join together, telling a story about themselves. A few strips could be joined together to make a longer presentation. Once the strip is completed, move it from right to left behind a frame (such as a cardboard box with a cut out window or simply moving it along a table under a frame).

TT1 CREATIVE ACTIVITY 3 Telling a Story in Images (60 - 90 minutes)

Learners make a sequence of photographs which show something happening.

Learners plan a series of four to six photographs which tell a short story e.g. someone unexpected coming into the room.

For each photo, they need to discuss:

- Who is in the photo?
- What props can be seen?
- Where do we position the camera?

Help them create the mini-story by encouraging them to think about exactly what should be in the picture; how it contributes to the story; how close to the people and things in the picture the camera should be, and at what angle; what the props will add to the meaning; how the setting will affect the viewers' reaction to the surprise visitor.

Encourage the learners to use a big **close-up** for at least one of the images (eg of a door handle turning, or a face showing an expression of surprise) to add drama. If you have the option of presenting the images with sounds, discuss what kinds of sounds would be appropriate to create the mood that they want (ie is it a happy or horrid surprise?).

Use your discussions to bring home to the learners that they are making choices by the same process as is used by people making programmes and films.

TT1 ACTIVITY 4 Single shot film (2 hours)

Learners create a story to be enacted in front of a fixed camera.

This activity reproduces the work of very early filmmakers (1895 onwards) who used short rolls of film that would only last a minute at most, and saw no need to move the camera, as they thought of themselves as photographers rather than filmmakers: the important thing was the movement *within* the **frame**. To get an idea of what these films looked like, go to www.screenonline.org.uk and find the Mitchell and Kenyon collection¹. Learners in groups of 2 or 3 plan a one-minute film made with a single shot, without any cutting or camera movement. Plan the shot using a **viewfinder** frame; most of the time will be spent planning, rehearsing and then executing the final shot. Think about using different locations and scenes in your area, such as the local park, the college canteen, or the street.

Watch the film(s) and discuss what difference it makes to be looking at an ordinary scene on film, rather than just watching it yourself. Discuss what kinds of camera movement or technique the learners would like to have used (eg following someone walking along, or **zooming** in to see something more closely).

For a second 'go' at this activity, encourage learners to introduce different camera movements such as zooming in for a closer view, or **panning** (ie swivelling the camera sideways to follow a movement or reveal the scene). Watch the film(s) and discuss what differences these movements have made to the scene.

¹ Your college needs to be registered to use this site. Registration is free: go to <http://www.screenonline.org.uk/media/identify.jsp?> to find out if you are registered.

TT1 CREATIVE ACTIVITY 5 Stop motion: Appearing and disappearing (60 minutes)

Learners create a simple 'special effect'.

This activity illustrates a very simple level of **special effects** (inanimate objects disappearing and moving by themselves) to show that the camera CAN lie! Set up a scene such as a table or a corner of the room, full of objects, and set up a video camera in one position with a good view of the scene, using a tripod. Film for 3 seconds, then stop. Now remove one object from the scene (be very careful not to move the camera or any of the other objects) and then film for another 3 seconds. Repeat this process until all the objects have been removed. When you play the sequence back, it will look as though all the objects magically vanish one by one.

Variations on this activity are:

- Replace each object with something else. This will make it look as though all the objects are magically transformed.
- Continue the sequence by replacing all the objects so that the scene ends up where it started.
- Use a group of people rather than objects - but they have to be prepared to stand or sit still for a while. You can make this more amusing by including reactions to each disappearance: everyone has to stare at the place the last person has been removed from, and look amazed.

Teaching Topic 2: Introduction to Recognising Modality

This topic aims to help learners to be more confident about judging whether or not to believe something in the media. They will learn some techniques for analysing and interrogating film and TV in order to help them make these judgements. They will also find it enjoyable to explore these matters and argue about them with others. As in Teaching Topic 1, you do not have to do all the activities: just choose those that you think will work best in your context.

Learning objectives

By undertaking some or all of the activities in this topic, learners should achieve the following three learning objectives:

1. Understand that specific techniques can be used in media products to indicate that what they are presenting is true.
2. Recognise the use of special effects to portray something that could not happen in real life.
3. Know how an image can be modified in order to produce a particular effect.

Rationale

‘Modality’, in the context of learning about the media, refers to the extent to which a media product such as a film or TV programme is meant to be real. It can thus help you avoid getting stuck in the simple and often tedious ‘either-or’ argument about whether something seems to be real, by offering you the more interesting and practical activity of investigating whether it may be *meant* to be real, and if so how you can tell.

Films and TV programmes make at least seven different kinds of claim for credibility; you may want to explore these with learners:

- News, sport and some **documentaries** claim to *tell the truth* about events in the real world.
- **Reality TV** shows, competitions and panel games claim to show people in *real* situations.
- Advertisements, party political broadcasts and some documentaries aim to *persuade* us to agree with an *opinion*.
- Historical reconstructions and dramas, or drama-documentaries ‘based on fact’ aim to *convince* us of their *accuracy*.
- TV programmes on cookery, gardening, childcare and other activities aim to *demonstrate the right way* to do things.
- Dramas and dramatic performances can be *realistic* and *lifelike* or *authentic*.
- Some fictions may seek to offer a *moral* or *emotional truth*.

There are therefore no simple right and wrong answers about what you can and cannot believe in the media. This can be particularly confusing, and sometimes alarming, for people who find it hard to understand what is presented on TV, or who may not pick up on the nuances which reveal, say, an ironic purpose. Much TV and some films also appeal to audiences by deliberately playing with the boundaries between fact and fiction. This topic should help to explore these issues.

Teaching Topic 2: ACTIVITIES

The first two activities will help learners explore the concepts of truth, falsehood and deception. The next three activities offer ways of starting to use these concepts in analysing and talking about media products. Recent research shows that people with learning disabilities are particularly unsettled or upset by on-screen violence: Activity 6 is included for use if you feel that exploring the issue of violence in the media would be helpful for your learners.

ACTIVITY 1 True, false or maybe? (30 - 40 minutes)

Learners listen to statements and discuss them.

ACTIVITY 2 Telling stories (30 - 50 minutes)

Learners devise and tell stories to the group.

ACTIVITY 3 Which is more real? (60 minutes)

Learners look at TV extracts and discuss them.

ACTIVITY 4 Are they really that gorgeous? (30 - 50 minutes)

Discussion: learners draw on their own knowledge and experience, and explore images of celebrities on websites and/or in magazines.

ACTIVITY 5 Is it what it seems? (30 - 50 minutes)

Learners look at magazine and/or internet images of food, settings, and actions, and discuss.

ACTIVITY 6 Talking about violence (30 - 60 minutes)

Learners discuss and explore things that have scared them in TV and film.

CREATIVE ACTIVITY 1 Playing with Scale (60 minutes)

Learners take photographs to make someone look really big or really small.

CREATIVE ACTIVITY 2 Making a miniature set (2 hours)

Learners construct sets to create the illusion of reality.

CREATIVE ACTIVITY 3 Travel album (60 minutes)

Learners use the blue screen technique to show themselves in different environments.

CREATIVE ACTIVITY 4 Story telling (60 minutes)

Learners change the 'truth status' of a story.

Resources for Activities 1 - 6

Computer or DVD player
Monitor or projector and screen
Internet access
Celebrity magazines
TV food advertisements or food/cooking magazines

TT2 ACTIVITY 1 True, false or maybe? (30 - 40 minutes)

Learners listen to statements and discuss them.

Prepare some statements to put to the learners. They then have to sort them into one of three categories: true, false or maybe. You can do this orally or write the statements on cards for the learners to sort on a tabletop, or use a whiteboard.

These are some of the statements you could try (substitute different names in the 5th and 12th statements if necessary):

It will rain tomorrow.
Dogs have four legs.
A table has four legs.
Dentists take care of your feet.
Lily Allen is beautiful.
Aeroplanes are bad for the environment.
Carrots are vegetables.
All cars run on petrol.
Pizza is delicious.
French and Spanish are European languages.
England's monarch is Queen Elizabeth II.
Brad Pitt is a great American singer.

Some statements will be less easy to categorise than others. Encourage learners to debate these, and talk about circumstances under which they could be false or true.

TT2 ACTIVITY 2 Telling stories (30 - 50 minutes)

Learners devise and tell stories to the group.

Sometimes we say someone is ‘telling stories’ when we mean they are lying. But relating a real event is also ‘telling a story’. This activity is to help learners see the difference between a true story and an invented one.

Learners could work individually or in pairs. You want half of them to tell a true story and half to tell a made-up story. Only the individual/pair should know which kind of story they are planning to tell. You could allocate the task by handing individuals/pairs slips of paper with T (true) or F (false) on them. Or they could pick folded slips of paper randomly from a hat or box.

Explain that each student/pair is going to tell a story about a simple event that happened recently. The people who are telling a true story should relate something that really happened to them; those who are telling a made-up story should invent a story that sounds quite likely or possible, but which didn’t really happen. The stories can be simple accounts of going shopping, meeting a friend, seeing a film at the cinema, watching a match on TV and so on. Tell both groups to think about the answer to the following questions:

- What happened?
- Where were you?
- Who were you with?
- When did it happen?
- Why did it happen?

The learners then take turns to tell their story. The rest of the group decides whether the story is true or false. Encourage discussion about why they thought as they did. Was it to do with whether or not the story included convincing details? Was it due to their own knowledge of the storyteller? Was it the way the student spoke or looked?

It can then be valuable to discuss why people want to tell true stories and when, and why, they want to tell false ones.

TT2 ACTIVITY 3 Which is more real? (60 minutes)

Learners look at TV extracts and discuss them.

In this activity, learners compare two TV programmes and discuss which is more 'real', and why? You need to choose two contrasting programmes which you know the learners watch and like. Good examples would be:

- a favourite **soap opera** vs the news;
- a documentary about something contemporary (e.g. tigers in India) vs a documentary reconstructing something from the past (e.g. dinosaurs);
- a naturalistic 'workplace drama' (e.g. *The Bill* or *Casualty*) vs a thriller or horror story;
- *Match of the Day* vs. *Celebrity Come Dancing*;
- **animation** (e.g. *The Simpsons*) vs **live action** (e.g. *Neighbours*);
- an advert for a car vs a **public service announcement** (e.g. about not driving too fast).

The activity will work much better if you can use actual clips (or at least a still image) from the two chosen programmes to promote discussion and illustrate points. It's very important to stress that there are no right or wrong answers here. The learners might have good reasons for feeling that they believe one programme more than another - all programmes use strategies to try to be 'real' on some level. Here are some strategies that programmes use to seem more real, and signals which provide clues about whether something is factual or not

Signals that 'this really is factual':

- factual programmes often use a **presenter** or **commentary** to tell the viewers about a particular place, event or person, for example in travel programmes or documentaries;
- factual programmes often include interviews with people who know a lot about the subject, and others who have a different opinion;
- sometimes we hear the voice of a person who's not on the screen talking about what's happening: in other words, a narrator;
- the presenter and other people often look at the camera while they talk, which makes it seem as if they're talking straight to us, the audience;
- the programmes include 'real people' who:
 - are the same person all the time;
 - don't try to look different or to pretend that they are someone else;
 - use their own, real name.

Strategies that persuade us a story is lifelike or realistic:

- some programmes are really familiar because they've been running for so long;
- they use settings which are like the ones we see every day;
- actors talk and behave like people we know;
- we care about what happens because we've built up a relationship with the characters over many episodes or several series;
- storylines show things that happen in everyone's life, such as keeping secrets, relationship break-ups, marriage, death;
- characters talk to one another as if no-one else is watching them.

Elements that make us think a programme has been made up:

- animation;
- music;
- makeup, **prosthetics** or models that make people look like monsters or aliens;
- technical tricks to show things that couldn't really happen, like people or things suddenly appearing or disappearing.

TT2 ACTIVITY 4 Are they really that gorgeous? (30 - 50 minutes)

Discussion: learners draw on their own knowledge and experience, and explore images of celebrities on websites and/or in magazines.

Another aspect of realism in moving image media is how people can be made to look more attractive than they actually are in real life. Ask learners if they can name some ways in which celebrities are made to look even more beautiful or handsome. Some ideas to discuss are:

- make-up;
- hair-styling;
- teeth straightening and whitening;
- facial surgery e.g. face-lifts;
- using computers to change the way people look in magazines.

Software for enhancing visual images is increasingly available as free downloads or 'bundled' with new computers. Interesting examples of computer enhancement in practice can be found at: www.mediaawareness.ca/english/resources/educational/teachable_moments/photo_truth.cfm. This website includes other, more controversial, uses of computer enhancement, to make people look more sinister or criminal.

A simpler way of illustrating how celebrities' looks are manufactured by the media is to find a celebrity magazine which shows 'paparazzi' snaps of stars in their private life, when they weren't expecting to be seen, without their make-up and a stylist to help present them. Compare these to pictures of the same celebrity at a film premiere or awards ceremony, where they are carefully groomed and dressed.

Another way of helping learners to understand the kinds of changes that are possible is to ask them to look at an older celebrity's face over the years. You can usually find websites dedicated to a celebrity that include pictures taken over an extended period of time, and may show some significant changes. Learners will probably want to discuss whether they think s/he looks better or worse as a result of these changes. This is also a good activity to illustrate the difference between fact and opinion.

TT2 ACTIVITY 5 Is it what it seems? (30 - 50 minutes)

Learners look at magazine and/or internet images of food, settings, and actions, and discuss.

Food is a great example of how things that look real on TV or in magazines are often not the real thing at all. Download or record some TV food adverts which you can show, and/or use photos from food or cookery magazines.

Explain that just as actors have make-up, so food is treated to make it look great. Some of the ways that food is styled for photos are:

- oil is used to make fruit and vegetables look shiny;
- hamburgers are propped up with toothpicks and cardboard, and the little seeds might be stuck on with glue;
- plastic ice cubes are used instead of the real thing,
- smoke from cigarettes is used to look like steam rising from food;
- smoothly mashed potato may be used in place of ice-cream so it doesn't melt under the heat of the lights needed for the camera;
- food may be sprayed with hairspray to keep it in place.

And, really importantly, computers are used to change the way the food looks, for example making it look brighter or softer.

You can also encourage learners to think about how places on TV and in film are not always what they seem. Sometimes films are made inside or outside real buildings. But often a setting has been built specially and it isn't a real, complete structure: for example the *EastEnders* exterior **sets** are just house fronts held up by huge wooden supports behind. Interiors may either be real rooms in a chosen **location**, or specially built rooms in a studio, which have no ceiling or windows, and perhaps only three walls. Learners can be asked to think about well-known rooms in soap operas and describe exactly what they know about a particular room. Often they will realise that there is one part of the room that they never see. DVD 'extras' or 'behind the scenes' programmes often show how sets and locations are used.

Scenes that can't be filmed in a normal way, perhaps because they're things that aren't real, such as an alien space ship, or are too expensive to film in reality, such as an ocean liner sinking, can be shown by the use of special effects. The main ways of making special effects are:

- trick camera-work and **editing**, which make things seem real or more dramatic. An example of this would be making it look as if someone has disappeared in a puff of smoke, or sequencing different shots in order to make it look as though someone is hanging by their fingernails from the parapet of a skyscraper;
- making special **props**, such as light sabres for *Star Wars*; or outsize chairs for Hobbits to sit on in *Lord of the Rings*, to make them look small;
- computers are also used increasingly to create complicated or difficult scenes, such as battles (where film of a small number of extras can be copied over and over again, then combined in one scene to look like thousands of fighters; also for things that don't exist in the real world today, such as dinosaurs.

TT2 ACTIVITY 6 Talking about violence (30 - 60 minutes)

Learners discuss and explore things that have scared them in TV and film.

Ask learners what they think of when they hear the word 'violence'. If they're not familiar with the word, you could ask: what things on TV scare or upset you?

You'll probably be able to use some of their responses (e.g. 'people hurting each other', 'fighting') in helping them to recognise two of the main elements of violence:

- using force - ask learners to give examples (e.g. shoving, kicking);
- doing something which hurts somebody - you can ask learners how people can be hurt i.e. physically or emotionally.

Ask learners which of the following acts of violence might have really happened and which are probably pretend, or make-believe or just a story:

- film on the news about a grandmother being shot in Baghdad;
- a documentary about fights between different gangs in a city;
- an animation showing a mouse being hit by a cat with a big hammer;
- a punch-up between two characters on *EastEnders* (use character names if a suitable punch-up has occurred recently on the programme);
- a travel programme which has a scene of a man kicking a dog;
- the hero being shot dead in a movie;
- one contestant spitting on another in a reality TV show.

The activities in this topic should help learners to understand and explore the differences between 'real' and 'make-believe' and the techniques used in each, but you may find it useful to remind learners of the following ways in which the media can make fictional (or 'pretend') violence feel real to the audience:

- dramatic or scary music, e.g.
 - a strong drum-beat, which could remind us of our own heartbeat;
 - spooky music (perhaps from an electronic machine rather than a musical instrument) which can make us more uncertain about what might happen next, and feel scared;
 - music which builds up to a climax, either in volume or speed;
 - very high or very low notes;
- sound effects - these are sounds which are added onto the film rather than 'natural' ones that can be heard when the action is being filmed. For example, when we see one actor slapping another, they don't really slap them, so there isn't any natural noise. To make it seem real to the audience, the sound of a slap is added to the soundtrack.
- using **hand held cameras** which make the film look 'shaky', as though the camera person is also scared;
- using a **Steadicam** to make us feel as though we are more part of the action;
- using **slow motion**, when the film shows something happening more slowly than it would happen in real life.

Violence is more upsetting to watch if:

- we've got to know the characters, whether they are real people or actors pretending to be other people;
- we like the characters;
- we identify with (feel that we're similar to) the characters;
- it feels very real - especially if we can see that people are in pain or how hurt their bodies are e.g. if we can see blood.

Teaching Topic 2: Creative Activities

Try any of these four activities to allow learners to experiment for themselves with techniques for making images seem more or less real.

Resources for Creative Activities:

Digital still camera
Some basic costumes, make-up and lights
Video editing software
Image manipulation software such as PhotoShop
Computer, data projector and screen for viewing images
Printed photographs, glue, photocopier (activities 1 and 2)
Large cardboard boxes, packaging, cartons, plastic bottles, paint, papier mâché (newspaper strips and wallpaper glue), fabric scraps, wire (activity 2)

TT2 CREATIVE ACTIVITY 1 Playing with Scale (60 minutes)

Learners take photographs to make someone look really big or really small.

- Learners stand on a box, crate or chair (or get a shorter student to stand next to someone else who is tall) Door-frames and other surroundings can highlight scale relationships. This sort of effect is commonly used in film to make the male lead look taller in action and romantic scenes. Many famous actors are not very tall, eg. Sylvester Stallone and Tom Cruise.
- Superimpose pictures of learners on scenes such as cityscapes, close ups of plants or any interior scene, playing with scale relationships to make learners look either miniature or giant. This can simple be done by carefully cutting out a photograph and placing it in different scenes. The images could also be photocopied (most copiers have a setting for photographs which produces a clearer image), to create a seamless image.

TT2 CREATIVE ACTIVITY 2 Making a miniature set (2 hours)

Learners construct sets to create the illusion of reality.

- Construct a mini street scene using photographs of buildings, shops and landmarks in your local area, cars, letter-boxes etc. Print out in colour and stick on thick card or old cardboard boxes with a support at the back. Take full length photos of learners and cut out, stick on thick card with supports. Learners take photos of the scene.
- Construct a miniature set of a room such as a lounge or kitchen. One side of the room should be open. Learners can work on different aspects of the set, depending on their ability. Look at images from magazines and home store catalogues and encourage learners to make choices. Details such as light switches, wall sockets and skirting boards can add to the effectiveness; encourage learners to think about detail. Look at animated films such as Wallace and Gromit for ideas. Simple puppets can be made, using papier mâché for the heads and plastic drink bottles covered with fabric for the bodies.

TT2 CREATIVE ACTIVITY 3 Travel album (60 minutes)

Learners use the blue screen technique to show themselves in different environments.

- Learners take photos of each other against a bright blue or green screen. This colour background can easily be edited out with standard software such as Powerpoint by selecting the dropper tool from the format picture toolbar. This will create a cut-out image of the student which can be layered on top of different backgrounds such as photos of different travel destinations and landmarks that the student has selected. Discuss clothing and props that would be appropriate to different environments, eg. hat, sunglasses and beach towel.
- For more information to explain how this technique works in detail there are bluescreen effect (chroma keying) tutorials available on YouTube:
http://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=4RZnF_BhnOs (Bluescreen Effect Tutorial) and
<http://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=BqAiPiw1ZrU&NR=1> (chroma keying)

TT2 CREATIVE ACTIVITY 4 Story telling (60 minutes)

Learners change the 'truth status' of a story.

- Learners choose a familiar fairy story scene such as 'Cinders weds her Prince Charming' or 'Jack in close shave with Giant', and present it as a news story, either in writing or presented to the class, TV news style (see Topic 4, News, page 34).
- Using video editing software such as MovieMaker (on PC) or iMovie (on Apple) or presentation software such as PowerPoint or Photo Story, learners either film or photograph a short scene showing two people meeting. They then change the selection and/or the order of a sequence to change the meaning (eg they can be shown as (a) surprised or (b) pleased - to see each other).

Teaching Topic 3: Introduction to Recognising Genre

The main purpose of this topic is to help learners express their enjoyment and knowledge. By developing their understanding of genre, learners will extend the ways in which they can access and talk about film and TV and, by doing so, extend their enjoyment of these media. As in Teaching Topic 1, you do not have to do all of the activities. You also have the option of choosing either soap opera or horror films for the media extended activities.

Learning objectives:

By undertaking some or all of the activities in this topic, learners should achieve the following three learning objectives:

1. Be able to identify personal media preferences based on genre.
2. Understand that genres can be identified and differentiated through key features.
3. Understand that there are 'rules' governing what is and is not likely to appear in a particular genre.

Rationale

Genre is a French word meaning 'kind' or 'type'. An interesting and useful way of thinking about and discussing media is to group films or programmes on the basis of features they have in common. The media industries do this both at the planning stage of a new film or programme, and at the marketing stage. Audiences use genres to help them choose what they want to see, so people will say 'I love horror films' or 'there's a new sitcom on BBC 2 tonight'. Well-known and long-lasting film genres are:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------|
| • Horror | • Thriller |
| • Science fiction (or 'sci-fi') | • Adventure |
| • Musical | • Disaster |
| • Western | • War |
| • Romantic comedy (or 'rom-com') | • Biopic |
| • Crime | • Fantasy |

Established TV genres include soap opera, sitcom, **game shows**, **crime series** and **reality TV**, but it can be argued that in TV, **formats** matter more than genres, being often copyright-protected; they are however unlikely to be as long-lasting as film genres.

The most interesting and enjoyable thing about genre, however, is not just the features that films or programmes may have in common, but the ways in which the 'rules' of the genre are developed and played with by media producers. So, a new science fiction film or a new soap opera will never be just the same as previous ones (that would be very boring) but will use the features of the genre in new ways and may develop the story in unexpected directions. New genres are always emerging, and producers may 'play' with genres by combining them (musical-western; comedy-horror) etc.

Genre is essentially about pleasure: the twin pleasures of recognition and surprise. Learners may well have favourite genres and may know a lot about them, so this topic can help them to articulate this knowledge. However, some people with learning disabilities can get very involved in the storylines of genres such as soap opera, and may believe that they represent real people and situations. This topic should help learners to understand and enjoy the 'made up' qualities of these kinds of drama.

Teaching Topic 3: ACTIVITIES

The first three activities in this topic deal with the general idea of genre in film and TV, through viewing, analysis and discussion, and a sorting activity. The rest of the activities deal with TV soap opera and with horror film, which are likely to be genres your learners know well. You may decide to opt for just one set of activities, depending on which of these two genres your learners prefer.

ACTIVITY 1 Identifying genres (60 minutes)

Learners watch adverts and identify the genres they represent.

ACTIVITY 2 Predicting what will happen (30 - 40 minutes)

Learners watch and discuss a film or TV extract.

ACTIVITY 3 Genre Classification (30 - 40 minutes)

Learners sort and classify programme titles.

ACTIVITY 4 Thinking about soaps (30 - 40 minutes)

Learners discuss soap operas and express their opinions about them.

ACTIVITY 5 What's in a soap? (30 - 40 minutes)

Learners draw on their knowledge of soaps in order to describe their 'rules'.

ACTIVITY 6 Testing the boundaries (30 - 40 minutes)

Learners draw on their knowledge of soaps to test the 'rules'.

ACTIVITY 7 Thinking about Horror (30 - 40 minutes)

Learners draw on their knowledge of the horror film genre.

CREATIVE ACTIVITY 1 Quiz time (40 - 60 minutes)

Learners participate in a TV quiz simulation.

CREATIVE ACTIVITY 2 A College Soap (2 hours)

Learners devise a scene for a soap opera set in their college.

CREATIVE ACTIVITY 3 Horror and Sound (30 - 50 minutes)

Learners use sound to create two versions of the same scene.

CREATIVE ACTIVITY 4 Horror and Lighting (60 minutes)

Learners use lighting to create 'horror' effects.

Resources for Activities 1-7:

DVD or video player, or computer with DVD player
TV or data projector and screen.
DVD of a film or TV programme
Computer with Internet access
TV listings magazines
Plain card (for writing on)

TT3 ACTIVITY 1 Identifying genres (60 minutes)

Learners watch adverts and identify the genres they represent.

Access the Thinkbox website Classic Ads section at this address:
www.thinkbox.tv/server/show/nav.28/chapterId/4. Watch the adverts listed below with your learners. Each one presents an affectionate parody of a well-known genre.

- Smash
- Carling Black Label
- Halifax
- Milky Bar Kid

Watch each advert at least twice. After each one, discuss the questions below (don't leave the questions until after you've shown all four - it's too much to remember). You may need to watch the advert again during the discussion, to check specific points.

- Have you seen any other films or TV programmes like this one?
- In what way(s) are they like this one?
- Can we give a name to this type of film or programme?
- In this type of film or programme, what kinds of story, characters, settings, props, costumes and actions would you expect to see?

The discussion that will arise from each example should enable the learners to see that, although they can probably recognise each genre, they may well not agree on exactly what the rules are. It's precisely this instability that makes genres interesting and enjoyable. The four genres exemplified in these adverts are: space adventure/science fiction (Smash), war movies (Carling Black Label), musicals (Halifax) and Westerns (Milky Bar Kid).

TT3 ACTIVITY 2 Predicting what will happen (30 - 40 minutes)

Learners watch and discuss a film or TV extract.

Choose a film or TV programme from a readily-identifiable genre, preferably one that at least some of the learners know and like, but, if possible, choose an example that they don't actually know. Watch the opening of the chosen film. Stop it after a few minutes. Discuss what's going to happen next and how the learners know.

If some individuals or groups of learners have strong attachments to different genres, you could use extracts that represent these genres and the 'aficionados' can explain to the rest what their expectations are and how they are able to 'read' these from what they have seen.

TT3 ACTIVITY 3 Genre Classification (30 - 40 minutes)

Learners sort and classify programme titles.

Write the names of a number of current TV programmes on to cards, making sure that you have a good variety of genres represented. You should have at least 20 cards with one programme title on each card. Ask the learners to work in pairs to group the title cards into genres, such as soaps, drama, documentary, comedy and so on. When the whole group share their findings, there could be some disagreement about which genre some programmes represent, or whether two programmes really belong in the same genre. This is the nature of genre and there isn't always a correct answer.

TT3 ACTIVITY 4 Thinking about soaps (30 - 40 minutes)

Learners discuss soap operas and express their opinions about them.

Soap operas are Britain's favourite TV programmes, and, like the rest of the country, people with learning disabilities would rather watch a soap than any other TV genre. It would be a mistake to underestimate the importance of soaps in the lives of people who faithfully watch them, several times a week, for years on end. The genre acquired its name because the earliest (radio) drama serials were sponsored by soap companies; and they're 'operas' because they tend to be larger-than-life and have storylines which are full of emotions. This activity introduces the subject through discussion about them. Firstly, ask learners whether they do or don't like soaps. Then ask if they can think of other reasons why people love soaps, and collect these reasons on a flip chart or whiteboard.

Some of these reasons for watching soaps may help to prompt discussion:

- They are part of the shape of our week.
- They make us feel we've got more friends (as if the people in the soaps are our friends).
- They help us to think about how similar or different we are to the people in the soaps.
- They're a nice way of escaping from what is really happening in our lives.
- They're an interesting way of finding out and thinking about things that are in the news (such as crime), or that are happening to people we know (such as marriages ending).
- It's fun to know 'secrets' about other people; the sorts of things we might not find out about the people we know in real life.
- They give us something we can talk about to other people, especially people who watch the same soap.
- The longer we watch a soap, the more we know the stories and characters and the more enjoyable it becomes.
- It feels good to know so much about a subject.
- They're easy to watch.
- There's a lot of emotion in them because of the stories and also the way they're filmed - e.g. lots of close-up shots of people's faces so we can really tell what the character is feeling.

The main reasons for not liking soaps are usually to do with their alleged lack of realism: that the lives of soap opera characters are much more dramatic and action-packed than real lives. You may have learners who express these views and in this case you can draw up a 'pro' and 'anti' soap chart.

You could then ask learners what sorts of things in their favourite soaps they like to talk about. Researchers list the main ones as:

- guessing what's going to happen next (one of the pleasures of soaps is that the viewer always knows more than any one character does);
- discussing what's happening in the different stories;
- having views about whether characters are behaving in a good or bad way;
- talking about their favourite and least favourite characters;
- discussing whether things that happen are realistic;
- comparing ourselves and our lives to people in the soaps - how similar and how different they are;
- discussing what we would do if we were in the same difficult situation as a character;
- learning about difficult issues which are either outside our own experience, or are ones that we don't feel able to talk to anyone about.

TT3 ACTIVITY 5 What's in a soap? (30 - 40 minutes)

Learners draw on their knowledge of soaps in order to describe their 'rules'.

Having had a discussion of why they like soaps and what they like to talk about in relation to them, learners will be better placed to try to define some of the properties of soap operas. By discussing soaps they are familiar with, can they come up with any 'rules' for soaps? If some learners are familiar with a particular soap, they could describe it to the rest who don't know it.

There are several features which make a programme a soap, rather than another sort of drama:

- they are **serials** which run for years and years;
- the storylines aren't finished in each episode, but flow through to the next episode;
- the stories are all set in one local area (a street, square, or village) where people know one another;
- the stories are mainly about the difficult personal lives of the main characters, who are all very involved with each other;
- episodes usually end with a **cliff-hanger** - in other words, with an incident in the story which makes you excited or worried about what's going to happen next;
- usually soaps consist of very short scenes;
- there are no flashbacks, point-of-view shots or atmospheric music, and rare use of unusual **camera angles**.

TT3 ACTIVITY 6 Testing the boundaries (30 - 40 minutes)

Learners draw on their knowledge of soaps to test the 'rules'.

When the learners have made their 'rules' for soaps, it's interesting to test the boundaries and see where some soaps break the rules. Ask learners whether *The Bill*, *Casualty* or *Holby City* are soaps. They do share many of the features above, so they can be classified as soaps, but they also have single-episode storylines: each programme has one or more stories that start and finish within that episode, which is not typical of soaps

Now learners should find it easier to define what is and what is not likely to occur in the plotline of a soap. You can make this a discussion of typical plot devices. Provide potential plot developments on individual cards and ask learners to put them into three groups: ones that are likely, ones that might occur occasionally, and ones that are very unlikely to occur in a soap opera. The box below shows some examples.

Likely	Occasionally	Unlikely
Argument between husband and wife Mystery about who's the father or mother of a character Family runs into money difficulties Two men fight over a woman A husband or wife has an affair	A character gets murdered A character wins the Lottery A character marries a millionaire A character goes to live abroad for a while	A character meets a space alien A character becomes Prime Minister A character solves a crime in every episode You discover the whole episode has been a dream.

You can apply these activities to moving image media of different genres in order to gain insights into what the genre is like and what you would expect from a film or TV programme in a particular category.

TT3 ACTIVITY 7 Thinking about Horror (30 - 40 minutes)

Learners draw on their knowledge of the horror film genre.

Establish first whether Horror is a genre that appeals to all your learners. There is no point in doing this activity if they find it frightening or distasteful! Horror, like all genres, tends to use certain storylines and characteristics to appeal to its audience. Basically, the Horror genre appeals to an audience who enjoy the thrill of being scared. It is thus similar to a 'white knuckle' fairground ride where the audience are willing participants who think they know exactly what to expect but are still thrilled by the experience. Like all other genres, Horror works by meeting the audience's expectations. So what is it they expect?

Ask the group what they would expect to see and hear in a horror film. You could prompt them with suggestions from the following list of techniques for creating a sense of foreboding and gloom:

- **Lighting:** (for example pools of light and areas of shadow; also scenes may take place at night with a full moon, wind and cloudy sky, and lightning);
- **Music:** (for example nerve-racking violins or sinister drum rolls);
- **Sound effects:** (for example creaking doors, thunder, wolves howling);
- **Setting:** (for example an old house or castle, a graveyard, a cave, a swamp or a forest; also bats and spider webs);
- **Characters:** (for example ordinary people who are going to be victims; ugly or disfigured people as servants, coachmen etc; suave but sinister villains; brave and ingenious professors or detectives; also note that women are often shown as helpless victims);
- **Editing:** (for example the positioning of sinister clues, or the withholding of visual information until it is suddenly revealed, to create suspense and shock).

To test out the suggestions made by the learners, you could watch short clips from some of their favourite horror films on DVD and identify the features you have been discussing.

Teaching Topic 3: Creative Activities

By doing one or more of the four activities in this section, learners should extend and consolidate their understanding of genre 'rules'.

Resources for Creative Activities:

Digital camera
Some basic costumes, make-up and lights
Video editing software
Image manipulation software such as Photoshop
Computer, data projector and screen for viewing images

TT3 CREATIVE ACTIVITY 1 Quiz time (40 - 60 minutes)

Learners participate in a TV quiz simulation.

Creating a quiz based on knowledge of soap operas can provide a chance for your learners to really excel and feel good about how much they know. You could divide learners into two groups: each group creates their list of at least 20 questions, then puts them to the other group. You will need to try to balance the groups so that, ideally, there are learners who watch a variety of soaps in each group. The kinds of questions they could ask include:

- How many times a week is it on TV?
- At what time is it on?
- Where is it set?
- What's the name of the actor who plays a particular character?
- Which character has been in the show the longest?
- Personal details about a character: who are they married to, how many children do they have, what's the name of their pet?
- About particular events: in which year did two characters get married, which characters were involved in a fight, who has been out with characters X, Y and Z?
- Can anyone sing the **theme tune**?

TT3 CREATIVE ACTIVITY 2 A College Soap (2 hours)

Learners devise a scene for a soap opera set in their college.

Learners script, plan and perform a three-minute scene (which could be filmed if resources and time are available). Learners could work in small groups, each doing a different scene. They should be encouraged to keep the project simple (no elaborate props or costumes for example). Creating the piece around a known environment will help learners to understand that, although real situations are used, those involved are acting out imagined outcomes.

Some possible prompts for story lines:

- Learners working in the kitchen: student 1 does not like student 2; one spills some food and blames the other; an argument breaks out. Will it be resolved or will the bad feelings continue?
- Learners A and B are attracted to each other: A decides to make B jealous. How will s/he do this? What will other characters say and do? Will it have a good or bad outcome?
- A character comes into college tired or angry: no one knows why; s/he shouts at other learners and staff. Who can help? What is the reason? Whom will s/he tell and why?

TT3 CREATIVE ACTIVITY 3 Horror and Sound (30 - 50 minutes)

Learners use sound to create two versions of the same scene.

Collect a series of images showing a peaceful setting such as the countryside, a garden or a village street. Either create a PowerPoint sequence with these yourself, or have the learners do this, using appropriate **transitions** (eg **slow fades**).

Divide the group into pairs or small groups, and give different types of music to each one: some will have pleasant, relaxing music; others ominous, foreboding music; some will have discordant sounds such as birds squawking, dogs barking, a distant train.

Show each version and discuss the effects of the different sound in each version.

TT3 CREATIVE ACTIVITY 4 Horror and Lighting (60 minutes)

Learners use **lighting** to create 'horror' effects.

Darken the room and use movable lights to create the following effects:

- Low-angled light positioned to throw a huge shadow on the wall
- Hold a torch under a student's face to create a scary expression
- Have people stand in front of the light to appear in silhouette

If you have the resources, these effects can be photographed or filmed, and played back for viewing and discussion about whether they really do look creepy. Changing the playback format from colour to monochrome can create an additional effect.

Teaching Topic 4: Introduction to Understanding News

BBC research (see www.ldmedia.org.uk/bbcresearch.html) shows that news programmes are important to people with learning disabilities, despite the fact that it's hard for them to follow the content, given the complexity of the language and issues. Because many people with learning disabilities rely on visual images rather than words to tell a story, important information can be lost (see www.mediawise.org.uk/display_page.php?id=889), so it's important for them to have opportunities to look at news and discuss their feelings about it. However, this topic may be quite challenging for some learners so you must exercise your judgment about whether to undertake it.

Learning objectives

By undertaking some or all of the activities in this topic, learners should achieve the following three learning objectives:

1. Recognising which TV or radio programmes are 'news' programmes.
2. Understanding that news producers make choices about what to include in the news.
3. Knowing some of the key elements of a news producer's job.

Rationale

Broadcast news programmes (TV and radio) in the UK are a distinctive type of programme with established conventions on how they are presented. News is widely assumed to give information in an objective and balanced way. But there are several factors which mean that complete objectivity, balance and comprehensive coverage are impossible. The activities in this topic are aimed at helping learners to understand how the factors listed below work and why they are important:

- **news values** that determine what does and does not get into the news;
- the order in which producers decide to show news items;
- the need to simplify issues;
- the need to choose specific words to describe things, people and events;
- the availability (or non-availability) of visual material (film, photos, graphics);
- the quality of any available visual material;
- rules about news which UK media have to obey;
- the need to present the news as authoritative and trustworthy.

All these factors mean that in every news **bulletin** things will be left out: either not covered at all, or covered in a simplified way. This is inevitable, but it's very important to think about what is not shown in TV news and why things may be left out.

Research among the general public shows, as you would expect, that news programmes are trusted by audiences. But is that trust well-placed? Studying the news is valuable both as a way of becoming more discerning about the programmes themselves and also as a powerful illustration of how selective and subjective all programmes are.

Teaching Topic 4: ACTIVITIES

Each of these five activities can be undertaken at different levels of sophistication, depending on your learners' interests and capabilities. Activities 2 and 3 are similar and could be combined, or you could do one and not the other.

ACTIVITY 1 Recognising the news (30 minutes)

Learners identify the features of news programmes that distinguish them from other types of programme.

ACTIVITY 2 Collecting the news (10 minutes per day over several days)

Learners collect and share their own news items and talk about their relative interest and importance.

ACTIVITY 3 News values (30 - 40 minutes)

Learners look at and discuss the importance of different news stories.

ACTIVITY 4 Trusting the news (30 minutes)

Learners watch and discuss the opening headlines of a TV news programme.

ACTIVITY 5 The news presenter's job (30 - 40 minutes)

Learners look at and discuss several images of news presenters.

CREATIVE ACTIVITY Making a News Bulletin (4 hours)

Learners create their own news programme.

Resources for Activities 1-5:

VCR or DVD player
Monitor or data projector and screen
Recordings of TV news bulletins
Photocopies of news items from press or internet
Computer with internet link
Newspapers and magazines

TT4 ACTIVITY 1 Recognising the news (30 minutes)

Learners identify the features of news programmes that distinguish them from other types of programme.

Watch or listen to the opening of a news programme and at least one other type of programme, and discuss the characteristics of the news programme that help us to recognise it. Features that may be mentioned could include:

- music - usually loud, urgent and rhythmic
- graphics - suggesting authority, speed, breadth of coverage
- set - usually modern, formal with little to distract the viewer - likely to carry an identifying channel logo
- formally dressed presenter who speaks direct to camera (see also Activity 4)
- voice(s) - usually middle class 'received pronunciation'.

To test out the learners' observations, use the live links of different companies' websites to watch news programmes from several different sources, in the UK and abroad, to see whether they all conform to the 'rules' of TV News presentation. News programmes from different periods can also be found at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthistday>.

TT4 ACTIVITY 2 Collecting the news (10 minutes per day over several days)

Learners collect and share their own news items and talk about their relative interest and importance.

Over a given period, ask learners to bring in news items and pieces of information that interest them. These might be taken from newspapers but they could come from other sources and could include items that do not normally get into the news, such as events in learners' families, material from junk mail, promotional material and so on. As well as discussing why these are interesting, learners could consider which items might get into mainstream TV or radio news, and which would not, and why. This could generate discussion about what 'counts' as news, and the differences between small social groups and families, and the wider public.

TT4 ACTIVITY 3 News values (30 - 40 minutes)

Learners look at and discuss the importance of different news stories.

This activity could follow on from, or replace, Activity 2. Find a number of news stories from newspapers or the internet, all of which have pictures which give a good idea of the story. Talk with learners about each story - some learners may have already come across some of them, and know what's been reported. Explain that people making news programmes have to take difficult decisions about which stories to put in and which to leave out. Then ask them:

If you were deciding on these stories:

- Which ones would you include and which ones would you leave out, and why?
- Which story do you think is the most important and would be the one you'd show first in the programme, and why?

Sport is usually covered in specialist sports programmes, but is sometimes reported on the news itself. To explore this, ask learners which of these sorts of sports stories they are likely to find on the news:

- Football match in Peru
- Chelsea vs Manchester United match
- Skateboarding World Championship
- Wimbledon tennis championships final

Ask learners to consider why each one would or would not be mentioned. Note that the Peruvian match and the skateboarding championship might be shown if something extraordinary happened on those occasions, particularly if it involved British people and/or there was film available. It could be interesting to speculate about what sort of thing would need to occur at these events for them to get into the news.

TT4 ACTIVITY 4 Trusting the news (30 minutes)

Learners watch and discuss the opening headlines of a TV news programme.

Show the opening headlines of a TV news programme. Pause after the news presenter has read the headlines and ask learners:

- Are there one or more stories you are interested in? If so, why?
- Are there one or more stories you find difficult to understand?
- Are there one or more stories you find worrying or upsetting?
- Other thoughts and feelings you have about what you've just watched.

Explore the reasons for their answers in as open a way as possible; for example: 'that's interesting, can you tell us a bit more about that?' If possible, identify one item from each of the three categories above (interesting, difficult and worrying) and show these, stopping to answer questions or explain difficult words or concepts.

After each item, ask whether the learners (a) understood, and (b) believed what they saw and heard and, in each case, explore the reasons for the learners' answers.

If possible, return to the topics a day or a week later and ask learners:

- What do they remember?
- Have they learnt anything else about the subjects they saw on the news since watching it - for example, have they seen or heard other news programmes talking about that subject?

TT4 ACTIVITY 5 The news presenter's job (30 - 40 minutes)

Learners look at and discuss several images of news presenters.

This activity will raise learners' awareness about what sort of people news presenters are and how they do the job. Look at still images of news presenters from more than one news programme and work out what sort of people news presenters are, what they look like and what they wear. Some characteristics learners might list could be:

- Looks and sounds like someone they can trust.
- Talks to you directly and seems straightforward and honest
- Looks smart and attractive.
- Depending on their accent, they may seem posh.
- Learners might think they must be clever to know so much about the news.

Ask learners to think about what kinds of people can be news presenters. Have they ever seen an older woman, or a disabled person, presenting the news? Encourage discussion about why certain kinds of people are unlikely to be chosen to be news presenters.

In most TV programmes, people speaking don't look directly at the audience (by looking at the camera). But in TV news programmes, the news presenters always do so. This helps:

- build a warm relationship with the viewers;
- make it seem that there's no-one else involved with giving the story, at least at that moment, so the story is the straightforward 'truth';
- makes it seem like they know the stories very well and are confident about how correctly they're giving information to the viewers.

Other things which help us to feel we trust the news presenter are:

- on most programmes, they sit behind a desk, reminding us of other official or serious situations, such as visiting the doctor;
- they are smartly dressed;
- they don't show how they feel about the news they are reading out. Their faces don't change much;
- the same news presenter does the news at the same time of day, often for many years;
- we don't see them arrive or leave the news studio so they seem to live there.

Learners may wonder how the news presenters know what to say, and may speculate that:

- the news presenters know the stories so well that they can talk about them without any notes;
- the news presenters are reading something which is hidden from the viewers;
- the news presenters know a bit about the stories and say whatever they want to about them.

Make it clear that presenters on the main news bulletins are reading from a script, which is shown on a **teleprompter**.

Teaching Topic 4: Creative Activity

This activity may be done very simply as a performance, but it can become more sophisticated if some of the more sophisticated resources are available and if the learners can undertake sustained activities.

Resources for Creative Activity:

Desk and background (e.g. curtain, window, programme 'logo')
Camcorder or webcam (and computer for editing if this is feasible)
Audio recorder and microphone (and computer for editing if this is feasible)
Computer with PowerPoint
Data projector and screen
Flip chart and markers
Bright blue or green cloth
Lights
Camera tripod

TT4 CREATIVE ACTIVITY Making a News Bulletin (4 hours)

Learners create their own news programme.

This activity can be as simple or elaborate as you and the learners want and can manage. At its most basic it could simply be something that is performed in front of the group or to others (although even at this level it would be good to think about a suitable backdrop, if only using a flip chart), but if you have the resources you could video it or make an audio recording; or you could make a combined presentation by using performance plus images and headlines on PowerPoint

Another source of help and information is BBC News School Report at http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/school_report/5273684.stm although inevitably this site is very much oriented towards schoolchildren (Key Stage 3).

If possible, give the learners a week to think about and gather material for a news programme of their own. Tell them to look out for interesting, unusual, funny or sad things that have happened to them, or their friends or family:

- 'home news' - could be about an issue that is currently in the news about the country; or an item about their own town or even their home;
- employment - about their work (including voluntary work);
- education - from their own studies or even a story about this news activity;
- health;
- crime - hopefully not anything that's happened to them, so it could be a story they remember from another news programme; or a report on local crime issues;
- finance - about something they've bought or how they feel about their level of income;
- foreign - their own holiday plans or a story about their last holiday; perhaps a travel programme they've seen; or a wildlife programme filmed abroad;
- sport - their own sporting activity or their favourite team.

Ask the learners to think of as many things as they can about what happened - the 5 Ws are a good way of prompting facts:

- Who?
- Where?
- When?
- What?
- Why?
- And a non-W, How?

Then help them to create the news programme by following the procedure below:

1 Selection and ordering

If there's too much material, help learners to discuss which is the most interesting and important to include and which could be left out. Make sure they take entertainment and variety into consideration as well as simply newsworthiness.

Help them to decide in which order to tell their news stories. The most important/exciting news should come first - it doesn't matter which category it's in. Other items follow, also in order of importance, but keep in mind that you want a good mix to interest all of your audience, too.

2 Writing a script

Help learners to write a script for their news. Remember that the **headlines** usually come first, although it's interesting to note that they may well be written last, since you have to know what's definitely being included before you can write them. Remind learners that the most important stories usually get more **air time**, so they can write a bit more about them. It could be useful for learners to time themselves while reading what they've written to see how long a certain amount of writing takes to say. They may then feel they want to edit certain items, a good way of showing how material gets selected or dropped.

Talk to learners about the language used in news reports. It's usually written in quite formal sentences, and as clearly as possible, although it may include difficult or technical words in order to be precise and accurate. Help them to try to emulate clear, formal speech in their scripts.

If it is appropriate for your learners, talk to them about the use of specific vocabulary, too. For example, fighters may be referred to as soldiers, insurgents, freedom fighters, terrorists, armed militia, rebels, guerrillas, and so on. Talk to learners about the meaning and connotation of these words and ask if they can explain how they can feel differently about the fighters depending on which words are used.

3 Finding images

While learners are collecting their ideas for news stories, they could try to gather any suitable images to illustrate them, too. News programmes like to use film of events, so if the learners can manage to record short extracts from TV, bring a suitable DVD from home (of a wildlife programme, for instance) or use a mobile phone or digital camera video function to record an event, that would be very useful. But the news also uses still photographs (of people, places or artefacts, for example), which learners may be able to find in magazines or newspapers, or by using their own photographs. They could also create images (for example, graphs or charts) for a financial report, or to show crime figures.

A more complex idea would be to film a report or interview for your news programme. Learners could interview family or friends involved in their stories, or take the role of a correspondent to report details of an item. This would then need to be edited into the finished programme.

4 Creating a set

Get learners to watch news programmes during their preparation week and to notice what the newsroom behind the news presenter looks like. The simplest set could be a desk and chair, with a plain, coloured background (against a plain wall, or by taping a coloured sheet of material onto a wall). In addition (and if available), you could add:

- a laptop computer on the desk;
- a 'logo' on the wall behind;
- a whiteboard or screen on which you could show film or images.

Some news programmes now try to be a bit more casual and show news presenters leaning against a desk or sitting on a comfortable chair or sofa at a low table. Learners could try to recreate a newsroom like this if the props were available.

5 Presenting the news

Spend some time rehearsing reading the news. The script can be written in big letters on a flip chart or learners may want to learn their script by heart. Get learners to watch each other and make suggestions:

- encourage the news presenter to speak at an even and reasonable pace and to enunciate clearly;
- remind them to look up and straight at the camera as much as possible
- Keep their hands still: they should not gesticulate or fidget. News presenters often rest their hands on the desk.

Teaching Topic 5: Introduction to Understanding Advertising

This topic could link very well to Teaching Topic 2: Introduction to Recognising Modality, which also asks learners to consider concepts like truth and accuracy. This topic takes these questions a stage further by focusing on techniques of persuasion, and may not be suitable for all learners. It also leads into Topic 6: Introduction to Understanding Representation, by focusing on how women are represented in advertisements. This topic will not be appropriate for learners who have little experience of shopping or for those with autistic spectrum disorders who may have difficulty in imagining other people's choices or points of view.

Learning objectives

By undertaking some or all of the activities in this topic, learners should achieve the following three learning objectives:

1. Recognise advertisements as distinct from other media products.
2. Understand that advertisements are created to sell products.
3. Understand that advertisements are created by people in order to attract attention or to persuade.

Rationale

Advertising is a pervasive element of our culture. It plays a key role in commercial life, and is focused essentially on selling products. Huge amounts of time and money are expended on it, which means that many TV and film advertisements are highly pleasurable and complex enough to reward repeated viewing. Learning about advertising must include developing an understanding of the techniques advertisers may use, and recognising that their messages may not be true in a strictly objective sense, but at the same time it must take account of the pleasures afforded by advertisements.

There are now around 600 **TV channels** in the UK, so the commercial TV channels have to compete with one another to attract advertising to pay for their own programmes. Advertisers spend large amounts of research time and money to learn what appeals to people, based on their gender, class, age, religion, ethnicity, health, region, etc. This information helps them to develop ads that will appeal to groups with similar tastes, interests, income and dreams. The **ITV** companies allege that a recent decision by the media **regulator, Ofcom**, to stop 'junk food' advertising to children has cut more than £30 million a year from their revenue. The advertising industry is a huge business, and TV adverts are one of the most expensive forms of advertising - not only to make, but also to pay for them to be shown on TV.

Teaching Topic 5: ACTIVITIES

For some learners, the first two analytical activities may be enough, as these will help to establish basic information about advertising. The third activity involves similar kinds of analysis but based on looking at TV advertisements. The fourth activity is more sophisticated and will not be appropriate for all learners.

ACTIVITY 1: Where do you see advertisements? (20 minutes, or brief sessions spread over several days)

Learners look for advertisements in their environment.

ACTIVITY 2: Starting to talk about advertising (20 minutes)

Learners think about and discuss their experiences of advertising and brands.

ACTIVITY 3 How do you know it's an advert? (40 - 60 minutes)

Learners view, discuss and analyse TV adverts.

ACTIVITY 4 Advertising and Representation (30 - 40 minutes)

Learners investigate who gets shown in adverts - and who doesn't - and why.

CREATIVE ACTIVITY Selling ourselves (4 hours)

Learners make an advert for a place or activity.

Resources for Activities 1-4:

VCR or DVD player

Monitor or data projector and screen

Computer with internet link

Newspapers and magazines

To access adverts use YouTube (go to <http://uk.YouTube.com/categories> and put in 'TV adverts' as a search term). Other useful sites are:

<http://www.classictvads.co.uk/homepage.html>

http://www.absolutelyandy.com/tvadverts/more_on_tv_adverts.htm

http://www.thefword.org.uk/features/2005/11/ordinary_ads_everyday_images

The digital resources available at www.mediasmart.org.uk are aimed at children and thus rather babyish but the learning objectives and types of activity suggested are helpful for teachers in other contexts.

TT5 ACTIVITY 1: Where do you see advertisements? (20 minutes, or brief sessions spread over several days)

Learners look for advertisements in their environment.

The scale of this activity will depend on learners' mobility and access to different spaces, but a wide range of advertisements and other branding material such as logos, graphics and colours can be identified even in just one setting: on people's clothes, items they may have with them such as bags, phones or magazines, and of course on television and the Internet.

It may be possible for you to take some time over this activity, spreading it over several sessions or days with brief opportunities each time to discuss where learners have seen advertisements, what 'counts' as an advertisement and what does not, and what each one is selling. A visual display could be created to show how many advertisements the group has seen and where they were found. Your discussions should seek to bring out the following points:

- There are a lot of advertisements around because organisations and businesses make their money by selling **products**, and they need to persuade people to buy them.
- Advertisements need to attract people's attention so they use images and/or sounds that people will notice. Images may be big and bright, and sounds may be loud; or they may be beautiful, or surprising, or funny. Different people may like different kinds of advertisement.
- Advertisements need to be placed where people will see or hear them. The people who make advertisements have to pay for them to be on poster sites or TV or radio. The best places and times cost the most money. Bigger or longer advertisements also cost more.
- Bigger organisations and businesses usually employ an advertising agency to design and produce their advertisements. There may be many different kinds of similar advertisements for some products (such as a film, or a new drink, or a new car): this is called an advertising campaign.

TT5 ACTIVITY 2: Starting to talk about advertising (20 minutes)

Learners think about and discuss their experiences of advertising and brands.

Ask learners some or all of these introductory questions:

- What are two other names for advertisements? (Learners may be able to come up with the terms ads, adverts or commercials.)
- How many advertisements do you think you see and hear every day? (Encourage them to think about TV, radio, billboards in the street or in stations, direct mail that comes through their door.)
- What brand names do you have at home?
- What do you like about these brands? How do they make you feel?
- Have you bought anything as a result of seeing it advertised?
- Are there other things you've seen advertised that you would like to buy?
- Do you like watching advertisements or not? Why?

TT5 ACTIVITY 3 How do you know it's an advert? (40 - 60 minutes)

Learners view, discuss and analyse TV adverts.

View a selection of adverts from television and the internet. Then ask learners how they can tell they are adverts. Features of TV ads include:

- they're very short;
- there are usually several in succession;
- they encourage us to buy something;
- some have funny or strange things in them (hundreds of coloured balls bouncing down a street or a car that seems to fly, for example); they may use music or animation;
- they come at the beginning, middle and end of a programme;
- they are completely different from the programme we are watching and from each other.

Choose one ad to watch again. Ask learners to pay close attention (you may want to show it more than once), then ask:

- What is being advertised?
- What happens in the advert?
 - Where is the action happening?
 - Who's in the ad?
 - What are the people/things doing?
- How is the product shown?
- What do you learn about the product?
- How do you feel about the product?
- Is there someone talking who you can't see (a 'voice-over')?
- Does the advert make you feel:
 - amused?
 - interested?
 - confused?
 - you'd want to buy the product?
- Can you think of any special ways the advert tried to make the product attractive e.g:
 - Music
 - Clever words
 - Lovely or interesting pictures

TT5 ACTIVITY 4 Advertising and Representation (30 - 40 minutes)

Learners investigate who gets shown in adverts - and who doesn't - and why.

Teaching Topic 6 on **Representation** (page 57) sets out a number of ways of approaching this quite complex issue, but you might like to link back to this topic and explore the ways in which men and women, different ethnic groups, or people with disabilities, are and are not shown in advertisements.

Catherine Redfern's website has a feature on how women are shown in adverts, with lots of photos illustrating the points:

http://www.thefword.org.uk/features/2005/11/ordinary_ads_everyday_images

She makes a number of statements about how gender, race and age affect what is and is not shown in adverts, for example:

- There were many images showing men and boys in very active poses; running, jumping, leaping, dancing, and fighting.
- There are many examples of men being silly and funny, but very few images show women behaving in similar ways.
- Men are very rarely, if ever, shown lying down or sitting down on the floor. Only women are usually shown lying or sitting on the floor, crawling, on all fours, or reclining in bed.
- Non-white women are shown very rarely, but some advertisements may feature women of East Asian appearance.
- The vast majority of holiday adverts feature women in bikinis.
- Older women are invisible.

Learners could look for magazine and newspaper adverts showing men and women and either test out whether these rules are actually true, or add their own set of rules about how men and women are shown in advertisements.

More ideas about gender in advertisements can be found at: <http://www.genderads.com>

Teaching Topic 5: Creative activity

Only one activity is offered here, but as in Teaching Topic 4, it can be extended as far as is appropriate for your learners and the context you are working in.

Resources for Creative Activity

This activity may be done very simply, or, if available, using some of these resources:

- Computer with internet link
- PowerPoint, Photo Story and Audacity software
- Data projector and screen or interactive whiteboard
- Digital still camera and photo editing software
- Camcorder and moving image editing software such as MovieMaker
- Colour printer and access to colour photocopying
- Large sheets of paper, scissors, glue and Blu-Tack

TT5 CREATIVE ACTIVITY Selling ourselves (4 hours)

Learners make an advert for a place or activity

As with the news programme in Teaching Topic 4, this activity can be kept simple or made more elaborate according to the learners' ability and resources available. At the most basic, learners could do their own lettering and artwork on paper. They would get a more sophisticated result by using a computer and experimenting with fonts, scanning in their own pictures/photographs, or downloading images from Google or elsewhere on the internet.

If the time and resources are available, a moving image advert could also be made. Bear in mind that a good 'compromise' is to make a set of still images and upload them to Photo Story (which is a free download) or into PowerPoint. Learners can then decide on the sequence of images, how long each one will stay on the screen, and what kinds of transition to use from one image to another. Words can be added on screen, or a sound track of words and/or music can be created using Audacity (another free download).

The advert will need to feature something they know lots about and, ideally, about which they have strong feelings or views. For example:

- Their college or day centre: they could produce a real web page for the college website, promoting their group, or publicising the opportunities for learners with disabilities. Or the end result could be posters to print and put up around the building.
- Somewhere they've been on holiday.
- An arts/sports/activist group they're involved with.

It would enhance the activity if learners could conduct some simple market research into their product before planning their advert. They might be able to write a short questionnaire to sound out people's feelings about the college or day-centre, their knowledge of learning opportunities for disabled people, or what they already know about a country or sport. If they can spend a short time talking to fellow-learners and noting their views, they can then discuss what they feel the message of their advert should be, and how best to get it across.

Help learners to think back to TT5 Activity 2 'How do you know it's an ad?' (page 41) and to think about the elements of an advert and what makes it work well. Some prompts could be:

- What will the tone of the advert be: serious, funny, factual, authoritative, aspirational?
- What kind of pictures will be needed: of the product, of people using the product, of pleasant associations (such as beautiful scenery), of celebrities?
- Do the words need to be persuasive, poetic, funny, authoritative, friendly?
- Would it help to use humour, exaggeration (without lying!), flattery (to make the audience feel good) or repetition?

If you are able to display the finished advertisement on a website or on posters around the building, a good follow-up would be for learners to repeat the market research activity after a week or so, this time trying to find out if people noticed the advert, how they reacted to it and whether it told them something new or made them want to try the 'product'. Depending on the results of their surveys, learners may be able to discuss what worked/didn't work about their adverts and how they might do them differently if they did them again.

Making a moving image advert will be a bigger project and you will need to consider where it can be shown. Perhaps it can be networked on the college or local VLE, or you might be able to get it shown locally at a community centre or cinema. But for public exhibition you need to be sure that your learners can produce something that other people will want to see and that they can do this themselves, rather than having the work taken over by others. This could mean enabling them to do a more modest 'try-out' first and then making the advert itself after they have gained an understanding of the processes involved. If you do not have the expertise to manage a moving image project or to get help for this within your own learning community, it could be worth investigating sources of outside help and grants. One useful source and starting point would be your regional or national screen agency, who could direct you to a local video workshop and inform you about funding sources. The UK screen agencies are listed at www.ukfilmcouncil.org.uk/fundedpartners.

Teaching Topic 6: Representation

This topic relates closely to Topic 3 (Introduction to Recognising Modality, page 21) and could form a useful follow-up to any work you have done with your learners in that area. But there is a risk that teaching **representation** to people who find the concepts very difficult to understand could unintentionally reinforce stereotyped beliefs. So it's best only to teach this topic if you are confident that your learners can understand the issues. This topic focuses primarily on still images (photographs in the press, and stills from films and TV) as this makes the concepts easier to access.

Learning objectives:

By undertaking some or all of the activities in this topic, learners should achieve the following three learning objectives:

1. Understand that there are differences between a real life event and its representation in a media product.
2. Recognise repetition as a key phenomenon in representation.
3. Understand that expectations of characters can be altered by minor changes to their appearance.

Rationale

All sorts of factors - from the characteristics and capabilities of media technologies, to deliberate or unconscious bias by media producers - can affect how the media present people and things. Studying representation involves exploring how and why this happens, and what the results can be. It includes looking at the complicated but important concept of stereotyping. This is especially interesting to people with learning disabilities, who have probably experienced stereotypical attitudes from others.

When people think they know what someone will be like, simply because they belong to a particular group (a nationality, a school, a religion, a club etc.), they are stereotyping that person rather than trying to find out what the individual is really like. The media can contribute to the development of fixed, limited and predictable views, which is what stereotypes are. The word 'stereotype' comes from the printing industry, and originally referred to a solid metal or papier-mâché 'master copy' of a page from which lots more copies could be made. A rubber stamp is a very basic sort of stereotype. So 'stereotype' invokes the idea of a fixed and repeated image. Key issues in stereotyping are that:

- stereotyping usually picks on a few things that are thought to be typical of members of a certain group, such as appearance or what they can do;
- stereotyping can often damage the group being stereotyped, not only by upsetting members of that group, but also by systematically limiting their life chances;
- stereotypes are difficult to discuss because they are usually based on 'a grain of truth' and also tend to become self-fulfilling - for example, negative attitudes towards people with learning disabilities can mean that they don't get jobs; so then people think they are unable to do jobs and are even less likely to offer them one;
- stereotyping is often used by politicians and by the media because it makes the world seem simpler and easier to understand than it really is.

Stereotypes have two main functions in the media and, indeed, in people's everyday conversations and thinking:

- As a quick way of characterising someone or something, so that others can immediately understand what you are referring to.
- As a way of reinforcing and justifying attitudes that demean or limit ways of thinking about a particular group.

Teaching Topic 6: ACTIVITIES

Just three analytical activities are offered here and each is potentially quite extensive. All involve finding and discussing still images: the first is a 'neutral' activity involving learners' own photographs, but the other two move into the area of stereotyping; you should be particularly cautious about how you embark on Activity 3 if you do decide to do it. You may find that it is better to do one or more of the three creative activities before the analytical work.

ACTIVITY 1 Look at my photos! (40 - 60 minutes)

Learners bring in their own photos, share and discuss them.

ACTIVITY 2 Everyday stereotypes (20 - 30 minutes)

Learners search the internet for 'neutral' stereotyped images and discuss them.

ACTIVITY 3 Offensive and harmful stereotypes (20 - 30 minutes)

Learners search the internet for 'loaded' stereotyped images and discuss them.

CREATIVE ACTIVITY 1 Creating a character (60 - 90 minutes)

Learners take 'constructed' photos of each other.

CREATIVE ACTIVITY 2 Making Puzzle Pictures (60 - 90 minutes)

Learners take photos which make the familiar unfamiliar.

CREATIVE ACTIVITY 3 Commutation Tests (60 - 90 minutes)

Learners swap over stereotypical roles in familiar images.

Resources for Activities 1 - 3

Learners' family/holiday photographs
Computer with Internet access
Selection of magazines and newspapers

TT6 ACTIVITY 1 Look at my photos! (40 - 60 minutes)

Learners bring in their own photos, share and discuss them.

Ask learners to bring in some photographs of their holidays, a family occasion or simply of themselves at home. Look at individual photographs as a group. Ask the learners (except for the one to whom the photo belongs) to say what they see. For example:

- who's in the photo?
- what do they look like (dressed-up smartly; in a special costume, such as a swimming costume or a ski suit; are they laughing or posing)?
- where do they seem to be (indoors, outdoors, in a restaurant)?
- what's happening in the photo?

Then ask the student to whom the photo belongs to tell everyone about the circumstances when the picture was taken:

- Where was it taken?
- Who was there (including people who may not be in the picture)?
- What was going on before and while the photo was being taken? Was there noise, music, laughter, drinks being served, silence, traffic noise?
- What happened after the photo was taken? Was that the end of the day, the evening or the event, or did lots more happen later?

Lead the learners towards understanding that photographs don't tell the whole story and often don't represent the scene pictured quite as you expect. It may not be at all clear to other people where you were or what was happening when the photo was taken. Sometimes, even people you know don't look like themselves in photos because they're dressed differently or the camera has caught them from an odd angle or with a strange expression on their face.

Discuss the fact that the choices made by the photographer affect what you see: where s/he stands, how s/he frames the photo (decides which parts of the scene to include), the moment s/he chooses to capture, and so on. This is why you don't usually look at someone else's photographs on your own. You need the person to tell you, 'that's the room we stayed in', 'this is the view', 'just off to the left was a fabulous swimming pool' so that you understand what you're seeing.

TT6 ACTIVITY 2 Everyday stereotypes (20 - 30 minutes)

Learners search the internet for 'neutral' stereotyped images and discuss them.

For this activity, you need access to the Internet to find some image banks to search. Google images has a large collection of pictures; or type 'photo libraries' into any search engine and try a few of the links that come up at the top of the list. These should belong to large, wide-ranging image libraries. Once on their sites, you can type a key phrase into their search facility and call up a selection of relevant pictures.

Ask learners to think up some search terms which might call up clear stereotypes. You will probably need to give some guidance here. Examples could be: 'rich people', 'country villages' or 'teenagers'.

Once your search has turned up some images, look at them together and try to analyse what they have in common. Again, you will probably need to mediate because image banks often throw up anything in their collection that could be vaguely related to your search. However, you should find that, for example:

- a search for 'rich people' will produce many images of expensive cars, big houses, champagne, successful business people, men smoking cigars, people dressed up smartly at parties and so on;
- the term 'country village' will bring up pictures of old stone houses or thatched cottages, in settings that include hills, trees and rivers, country pubs, village greens etc;
- a 'teenagers' search might include pictures of youths misbehaving (drinking, graffiti, fighting), images of music or partying, and 'trendy' artwork of teenagers' fashion.

Generate discussion about how true the images are, and how fair. Are all rich people like the ones in the pictures? Are all country villages picturesque and peaceful? Are all teenagers badly-behaved and/or fashion-conscious? Help learners to realise that what they are seeing are stereotypes: that people have programmed the search engines to look for clichéd images of certain types or groups of people. If you feel it's appropriate for your learners, you could ask them to discuss whether this way of categorising people is a useful shorthand device for referring to groups or whether it reinforces unfair stereotypes and should be discouraged.

TT6 ACTIVITY 3 Offensive and harmful stereotypes (20 - 30 minutes)

Learners search the internet for 'loaded' stereotyped images and discuss them.

Undertake this activity with care!

Try the same activity as before, searching for terms within an image bank via the Internet. It can be harder to find images for these topics, so it's sometimes helpful to add the word 'stereotypes' to your search. You may also need to try more different sites to get a good selection of images. Search terms could include: 'Women driver stereotypes', 'Black stereotypes' or 'Hoodie stereotypes'.

Encourage discussion about what stereotypes the images are promoting. Ask learners:

- how these could be offensive to the group in question
- how these could be harmful to that group

Teaching Topic 6: Creative activities

It could be useful to do one or more of these three creative activities before embarking on Activities TT6 2-4, in order to help learners understand that there is a relationship between 'real' people and things and their representations in the media, which can be explored.

Resources for Creative Activities:

Polaroid camera or digital camera and computer with software for processing images
Selection of accessories for 'costumes' (Activity 1)
Collection of images from magazines and papers (Activity 3)
Scissors, paper and glue
Photocopier

TT6 CREATIVE ACTIVITY 1 Creating a character (60 - 90 minutes)

Learners take 'constructed' photos of each other.

Get the learners to take photos of each other using a digital or Polaroid camera. They could try adopting different postures/facial expressions (e.g. angry, confident, shy, afraid, happy, in love) while the other learners see if they can guess the emotion. Encourage them to think about whether some emotions are better expressed standing up or sitting down. Is it easier to show a feeling if they use their hands (e.g. pointing a finger, waving a fist, hands concealed behind their back)? Would they hold their head upright, to one side or drooping? Shoulders slumped or pushed back? A selection of accessories, such as scarves, hats, ties, belts, sunglasses will encourage them to create different characters.

Either load the photos onto a computer or look at the Polaroids and discuss them.

- How successful are they at showing a mood or character?
- What makes the person look different from normal?
- How would other learners describe the 'character' they see in the photo?

TT6 CREATIVE ACTIVITY 2 Making Puzzle Pictures (60 - 90 minutes)

Learners take photos which make the familiar unfamiliar.

Get the learners to take pictures of familiar places, such as the room they are in, or other parts of the same building. Ask them to try to take pictures of things they've never noticed before, or to use odd or unusual angles. Again, upload the pictures to a computer or look at the Polaroids.

- Can the other learners guess where a particular photo was taken?
- What makes it hard/easy to recognise the place?

TT6 CREATIVE ACTIVITY 3 Commutation Tests (60 - 90 minutes)

Learners swap over stereotypical roles in familiar images.

Using a collection of recognisable images such as

- Advertisements for films
- Covers of TV magazines
- Press photographs of important events
- Images of sportspeople
- Celebrity parties

Learners find or create their own images of people with disabilities, men and women of different ages, people from ethnic minorities, etc, cut them out and fit them into the other set of images. Photocopying the resultant constructed images will produce more convincing 'fakes' and can be used to try out on other people. The constructed images could include:

- A Downs Syndrome person in a mainstream Hollywood film
- An older woman reading the news
- One of the learners at a celebrity party
- A black 'member of the Royal Family'

The 'test' aspect of the activity is to show the images to other people and see whether they notice the unusual element of the image - and if they do, to find out what they think about it. Further ideas may be prompted by the list of gender stereotyping examples given in TT5 Activity 3 'Advertising and Representation' (page 52).

Teaching Topic 7: Introduction to Using the Media

This topic is provided as a resource and a basis for extension activities with any of the other topics 1 - 6, rather than as something to be taught on its own. Guidance on labelling systems is provided here; it is assumed that the other two learning objectives will be achieved through activities in any of the other Teaching Topics.

Learning Objectives

By undertaking some or all of the activities in this topic, learners should achieve the following three learning objectives:

1. Understanding the labelling systems used by media regulators.
2. Identifying features of a media product that they find objectionable.
3. Using a listings service to choose preferred media products.

Rationale

People with learning disabilities can be more upset or confused about what they see in the media and may not find it easy to express these feelings to others. The aims of the information and activities here are to make it clear that everybody has rights in relation to the media and that the media companies and regulators all have responsibilities to see that these rights are protected. So it is possible for anyone to make their feelings or questions known to the regulators or the broadcasters and publishers, and they ought to receive courteous and perhaps helpful answers. The topics covered in this unit are:

Being upset by the media

How to complain

Regulators

- Television, radio, internet and telephones
- Films, DVDs and Computer Games
- Newspapers and magazines
- Advertising

Getting stories into the media (User Generated Content)

Social networking

Resources for Teaching Topic 7:

Computer with internet access
Access to computer with e-mail
Telephone directory
Telephones (landlines or mobiles) ideally with microphone
Newspapers
Advertisements

Being upset by the media

Violence, bad language and explicit sexuality are the things most likely to upset audiences. TV programmes and films can also be very frightening without ever showing any explicit violence. Learners can discuss the kinds of things they find upsetting - and may find that they are not all upset by the same things. They can also discuss the strategies they already use for coping with things they find alarming or upsetting, and can share their feelings with others.

Strategies for avoiding upsetting material could include:

- knowing what's likely to be in a programme eg by looking in a listings magazine or a film directory (book or website)
- understanding film classification or 'ratings'
- Knowing about the 9.00pm TV **watershed**. This means that programmes after the watershed, i.e. after 9.00pm, might not be suitable for children. These will include programmes which have violent or sexual scenes, and may contain strong language.

Strategies for dealing with upsetting material in fiction could include the following

- recognising it's fiction
- reminding oneself:
 - the actors are just pretending to be violent and to be hurt
 - it's not a true story - someone has imagined everything that happens in it
 - if we can see what seems to be blood, cuts or bruises, it's just make-up
- telling ourselves that this is not happening to us or anyone we know
- if the action is set in the past, this can help us feel it's definitely 'over'
- looking around us, knowing that this and not what's on screen is real and feeling safe wherever we are, whether it's in our bedroom, the lounge or in a cinema
- doing something which makes us feel physically separate from what's happening - eg saying something, standing up
- if possible, watching it with other people rather than by ourselves - and at home rather than in the cinema. At home we can leave the light on in the room, talk, move about - and leave the room easily.
- And, of course, we can always close our eyes and block our ears during the nasty scenes.

Note however that it can be more upsetting to stop watching at the beginning or in the middle of a violent or frightening scene, without waiting to find out how it is resolved: often the narrative itself can reveal explanations later on.

Strategies for coping with upsetting material in non-fiction could include:

- Understanding as much background about the news story as possible:
 - talking to people who might know more about the situation, for example if they've visited the country that's being shown

- knowing what's happening to improve the situation. For example, with a war situation, what's happening to try to end the war. Or with gun violence, what the police are doing to stop people being able to get hold of guns
 - talking to other people so that you know you're not the only person who is finding that news upsetting
- Remembering that things in the news are often in the news because they don't happen very often.
- Watching happy news stories as well as sad ones. This can help us feel less sad and powerless and also realise that not everything going on in the world is sad or frightening
- While feeling sad for and caring about the people involved, thinking that we are in a different position so we don't need to be very scared about the same thing happening to us. We can go over the ways that our lives are different - we live in a different country, Britain has a different history, we might live in a village while the fighting shown is happening in a city etc.
- As one of the damaging effects of seeing violence that has really happened to real people is that it can make us feel vulnerable or helpless, doing something active in response can sometimes help.

How to complain

Learners may have seen something on TV which they find offensive; their favourite programme suddenly stops being shown; someone says something on the news which they think isn't true. Learners need to know that not only can they do something, but it can make a real difference. One e-mail, phone call or letter can make a surprisingly big impact.

There are different ways in which anyone can be an active user of the media. The main ones are:

1. Making views known about programmes/films we feel strongly about
2. Checking what the regulators say
3. Getting personal views, news and photos into the media
4. Using social networking software

One way for people with learning disabilities to tell broadcasters what they think is to ring them. They'll be put through to the duty officer, who will take down what they say. This 'duty log' is taken very seriously by people at all levels in the channels, including programme makers and the director general. Alternatively, all channels have websites which carry their contact details: there can be many different contact points depending on what programmes you want to refer to and whether you want to complain or to get more information.

Regulators

There are laws and also 'softer' traditions about what should and what mustn't be broadcast or printed. Each major area of the media industry has its own regulator - and rules, but very few people look at these before contacting the regulators. It's easy to contact them and they usually give very full responses so at least one feels listened to.

Television, radio, internet and telephones

Ofcom regulates TV, radio and the internet - says what's acceptable and what's not. Two of its main jobs are to protect audiences from 'offensive or harmful material' and from 'unfairness or the infringement of privacy'. So if learners feel offended or harmed, or that a programme has been unfair, or that their privacy has been trampled on, they can complain to Ofcom. There is a long 'broadcasting code' and this sets out in detail how they make decisions about whether something is unfair or harmful. It can be found at: www.ofcom.org.uk/tv/ifi/codes/bcode.

For example, they'll bear in mind whether a programme could be expected to have shocking things in it or whether it's a nasty surprise, like finding something horrible in a children's programme. And although violence can be shown, it shouldn't make it look attractive or encourage people to copy it.

The sorts of things broadcasters can do to 'put things right' include apologising to anybody damaged by a programme, agreeing not to repeat the programme or changing it if it is going to be repeated.

Write to:

Ofcom
Riverside House
2a Southwark Bridge Road
London SE1 9HA Phone: 020 7981 3000

Or visit their website www.ofcom.org.uk

Films, DVDs and Computer Games

Films in the cinema and on DVD, and computer games, are regulated by the British Board of Film and Video Classification which gives a 'classification' or rating to each film and game, which indicates the age of people that can be allowed to see the film in a cinema, or to buy or rent the film or game. The BBFC has no power to say what we can or cannot watch at home or at a film club, or games we play at home, but the ratings can be used as a guideline to what may be suitable for any age-group. The problem with this system is that it can only tell us about the kinds of things that audiences might find offensive or upsetting. It can't tell us whether the film is really suitable for that age-group. So a film might get a 'PG' rating simply because it has not much sex or violence or bad language in it, but it could still be very boring for children or difficult to understand. This is why it is useful to look for reviews of films and to follow the recommendations of friends or other trustworthy people.

The Classification categories are:

- **U** - everyone can watch these in a cinema or buy or rent the DVD or the game.
- **PG** stands for Parental Guidance. Some scenes may not be suitable for young children to see or play.
- **12A and 12** - the 12A category only exists for cinema films. Cinemas should not allow anyone younger than 12 to see a '12A' film unless accompanied by an adult, and films classified '12A' are not recommended for a child below 12. The '12' category

exists only for videos and games. Shops and libraries cannot lend or sell a '12' rated video or game to anyone under 12.

- **15** - anyone aged 15 years and over can watch these in a cinema or buy or rent the DVD or the game. Cinemas should not allow anyone younger than 15 to see a '15' film. Shops and libraries may not sell or lend a '15' rated video, DVD or game to anyone younger than 15.
- **18** - only adults can see these - they have to be 18 or older. Shops and libraries may not sell or lend an '18' rated video, DVD or game to anyone younger than 18, Cinemas should not allow under-18s to see an 18-rated film in a cinema.

We can contact the British Board of Film Classification if, for example, we think that the classification of a film is wrong; for example if we believe that a film shouldn't be seen by people as young as the current classification allows; or that younger children should be allowed to see it.

Write to:

The British Board of Film Classification
3 Soho Square
London W1D 3HD

Telephone 020 7440 1570

Email contact_the_bbfc@bbfc.co.uk

Or visit their website: www.bbfc.co.uk

Newspapers and Magazines

The Press Complaints Commission is the regulator for newspapers and magazines, but unlike Ofcom, its rules are 'voluntary' and not based on laws. In other words, newspapers and magazines can choose whether or not to stick to these rules. (This in itself can be an interesting subject for discussion with learners.) It has a 'code of practice' which sets out what should and shouldn't be printed.

This is a very complicated area, because (confusingly), newspapers and magazines can be as biased as they like, which is not the case for TV and radio which have to be balanced. But although newspapers and magazines don't need to be balanced (e.g. give two sides of a story), they still have to be accurate. They can't print any old stuff. It's got to be true. So although newspapers and magazines can get away with much wilder content than TV or radio, they still can't print lies about people. There are also rules, for example, about not taking photographs of people 'in private' (eg in their home) without their agreement.

If they do print something which is untrue, they have to include information in a later copy which puts the facts right. And sometimes they should apologise.

Press Complaints Commission
Halton House
20/23 Holborn
London EC1N 2JD

Helpline: 0845 600 2757 E-mail: complaints@pcc.org.uk

Website: www.pcc.org.uk

Advertising

The Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) is responsible for adverts on TV, radio, in newspapers, magazines and 'billboards' - outdoor posters. The four things they check are that ads are 'legal, decent, honest and truthful'. So if an advert seems to be:

- Breaking the law
- Offensive (eg because it is shocking or upsetting) or
- Not telling the truth

we can complain to the ASA. They look into each complaint very thoroughly so at least an explanation must be provided for why the advertiser took the decisions they did. And at best, they will have to remove the advert or stop publishing it.

Write to:
Advertising Standards Authority
Mid City Place
71 High Holborn
London WC1V 6QT

Phone: 020 7492 2222

Or email them via their website: www.asa.org.uk

Getting stories into the media (User Generated Content)

The culture of the media has changed a lot in the last few years, so now audiences are encouraged to express their views and these are often included in programmes. Messages, images and video produced by the public and sent in by email and text are termed ‘user generated content’: this is a rapidly growing sector of broadcasting.

Letters

It’s not too difficult to get a letter into the local newspaper, and the letters page is one of the ones that is looked at by the most readers. Letters are also important because local politicians and people planning services use it to get an idea of what local people are feeling. Learners shouldn’t be too concerned about how to write the letter - a heartfelt, not too heavily edited letter should be well-received. The main things are:

1. Have a look at the letters page to see what sorts of letters get printed, how long they are, what their style is, etc.
2. Say clearly what they feel strongly about.
3. Include any ‘evidence’ of the problem - how do they know that something is wrong, or indeed that something is very right.
4. If there’s something they’d like readers to do, this should be included. It might be to contact their MP, come to a meeting, visit a website etc.
5. Remember to include a contact address.

Even if the letter isn’t printed, it shows that there is public concern about the issue, and it might help a similar letter from someone else to get put in.

Seize the moment! Ask learners if there are issues they feel strongly about and which they’d like to tell other people about. Even if you feel that what they come up with isn’t likely to get printed, it’s worth putting together a letter as a practice activity. And you can combine this with looking at the letters page of a local paper.

Meeting the local press

It can sometimes be possible to meet with the person who made a programme, a journalist or even a newspaper editor. This is most likely to happen if you can show that a large group of people feel strongly about the programme or article, or if you have something to say that is unusual or particularly interesting.

You could try inviting a local journalist to meet with your learners to talk to them about how stories, and letters, get into the paper. You could also ask if your group could visit their offices to get a better idea of how newspapers are put together.

Phone-ins

Radio phone-in programmes are an ideal opportunity to give personal opinions. The best preparation for this is of course to listen to the programme at least a few times. The character of programmes is very shaped by the personality of the presenter. Some are gentle and polite; others are very direct and even rude. You could discuss what sorts of calls get put on air in a particular programme and what sorts of issues are discussed. Radio programmes can usually be accessed online via the radio station website.

Images

It's becoming more and more common for newspapers, websites and TV programmes to include photos and video taken by members of the public. This is particularly the case if it's a really important news story which no professional photographer was able to get to. If any of your learners happen to be in a place where something exciting is happening, they can even take a photo or video with their mobile phone camera and then see if any media want to use it.

Social networking

Research by Ofcom in 2008, based on 27 interviews and 8 in-depth ethnographic studies, showed that the internet was the communications service least likely to be used by people with learning disabilities. This was due to the cost of equipment and internet connexions, the literacy requirements of most online activities, the amount of concentration required. Older people with learning disabilities are least likely to use the internet.

Those people with learning disabilities who do use the internet are most likely to use it as a hobby, as a way to keep up-to-date with their interests, and a communication service to keep them in contact with their friends and family.

Some of the younger participants in the study used social networking sites such as MySpace and Bebo to keep in touch with their friends or in some cases to make new friends. There are also social networking sites created specially for people with learning disabilities, such as www.specialfriendsonline.com. As time goes on it is likely that increasing numbers of people with learning disabilities will be using social networking sites and taking part in other activities, such as online gaming and visits to virtual worlds. There is therefore a growing potential for some of these people to make or receive inappropriate online contacts. It is beyond the scope of this resource to provide information and advice on this issue that will remain relevant and up-to-date: you should check your school, college or day care centre policy on internet use by learners. The Ofcom research is available at www.ofcom.org.uk/research/tce/ce08/disabilities.pdf.

Glossary

air time	Time available for, or allocated to, broadcasting on a topic or event, as in 'The debate about cannabis got a lot of air time this week.'
animation	The process of creating the illusion of movement by creating a series of still images that represent small stages of movement by figures or objects, and showing them at a rate of at least 10 per second. Three-dimensional models, cut-out shapes, drawings and many other techniques can be used as the basis for animation. The term 'animation', in reference to films, is preferable to 'cartoon'.
brand	The 'look' and associations of a product , company or organisation, that enable people to recognise it. 'Branding' is an enormous industry, dedicated not just to selling products but also to creating feelings and attitudes towards a brand, almost as though it were a person or a place.
bulletin	Another word for a news programme, usually consisting of several different stories.
camera angle	The level at which the camera is placed in relation to the subject. A 'high angle shot ' can make the subject look small or weak while a 'low angle shot ' can make the subject look powerful or threatening. A neutral (or 'straight-on') shot has little to no psychological effect on the viewer. A 'dutch angle shot ' (when the camera is set at a slant) gives the viewer a feeling of a world out of balance or psychological unrest.
camera movement	The camera can move in many ways and each one can affect our interpretation of what we are watching. See crane shot , hand held camera , steadicam , pan , tilt , and tracking shot .
CGI	Computer-generated Imagery or CGI is a highly sophisticated form of animation through which all kinds of creatures, objects and scenes can be created for films, TV and video games.
classification	The system of giving certificates to films, DVDs and video games to indicate the age level of the audience they are thought suitable for, and some indication about types of content (eg 'strong language'). Operated by regulators - in the UK by the British Board of Film Classification (see page 66).
cliff-hanger	A device to maintain viewer interest in a serial drama such as a soap opera : an episode will end just as something dramatic has started to happen, or is about to happen, so that viewers return for the next episode to find out what happens next.
close-up	In film and TV, a close-up tightly frames a person or object. The most common close-ups are of actors' faces. Close-ups are often used as cutaways from a more distant shot to show detail, such as characters' emotions, or some intricate activity by their hands. Close cuts to characters' faces are used far more often in TV than in films; they are especially common in soap operas . Close-ups are also used for distinguishing main characters. Major characters are often given a close-up when they are introduced as a way of indicating their importance. Leading characters will have multiple close-ups.
commentary	Often used in non-fiction or documentary films, when a voice is heard explaining what you are seeing, or its significance. Sometimes you may see the person who's talking; at other times you only hear their voice (a 'voice-over').

convention	A device or strategy used in film and TV which has become widely accepted, recognised and understood, and is commonly used. For example, when a character looks off-screen, we expect the next thing we see to be the object or person they are looking at.
costume drama	A film or TV programme set in the past, usually pre-20 th century, using recognisable costumes of the period.
costumes	The clothes and accessories worn by actors in a film or TV programme. These may be very different from everyday clothes (such as historical costumes), but even if the action is set in a familiar time and place (in a modern office, for example), the clothes the actors wear are specially chosen to say something about their character.
crane shot	When the camera is set on a crane in order to create a shot that rises up high above a scene, or starts high and comes down low. The high-level start or finish of the shot often has the functions of a wide shot .
credits	Opening credits, in a TV programme, film or videogame, are shown at the beginning of a show and list the most important members of the production. Closing credits, in a TV programme or film, come at the end of a show and list all the cast and crew involved in the production.
crime series	TV genre dealing with the detection of crime, often including the daily life of police officers and/or detectives.
cut	The simplest form of transition in which one shot is simply followed by another.
cutaway	In film, a cutaway is the interruption of a continuously-filmed action by inserting a view of something else. It is usually, though not always, followed by a cutback to the first shot . One common use of cutaways is in interviews, in order to mask the awkward cut created when an utterance by the interviewee is shortened: a cutaway to the interviewer, listening intently for example, is often used.
dialogue	People talking to each other. Sometimes used in a more general sense to mean any speaking in a film e.g. 'It was hard to follow the dialogue with the sound of the helicopter in the background'.
diegetic sound	Sound of any kind (including voices or music) that is part of the 'world' of the TV programme or film. This includes the voices of people you can see speaking, or noises made by events you can see happening, but it can also be sounds that don't relate directly to anything in the frame , such as birdsong or traffic noises which are just part of the atmosphere.
dissolve or mix	One type of transition : one shot gradually changes into another.
documentary	Documentary film is a broad category of visual expression that is based on the attempt, in one fashion or another, to 'document' reality.
duration	An 'invisible' but extremely important element of all films and TV. The length of shots and sound track components, and the rhythmic patterns which may govern the way they are assembled, make a major contribution to the way we understand and interpret films and programmes.

editing	The process of assembling and ordering all the elements of a film or programme. This includes selecting and perhaps shortening shots , putting them in sequence , adding transitions , assembling and adding one or more sound tracks , including sound effects and music. Editing can be the most creative stage of film and programme-making.
fade in/out	Another type of transition , applied both to images and sound. In an image fade-in, an image gradually appears on the screen; in a fade-out, it gradually disappears to be replaced by a black or white screen. In a sound fade-in, the sound starts faintly and gradually gets louder. If the sound gets gradually quieter, it is a fade-out.
feature film	This originally meant the 'main feature' of a cinema programme. Now it's used more generally to refer to any film of at least an hour, but more usually 90 minutes or more
flashback	When the story of the film goes back temporarily to show you an incident that happened earlier than the current action. Sometimes, a caption on the screen tells you when the flashback happened (e.g. two hours earlier; one month ago; April 1967); at other times you have to work it out for yourself.
Foley artist/track	The Foley artist is responsible for sourcing and making sounds that are not recorded naturally while making a film, for example, a hard slap in the face or a knife cutting flesh, or quite ordinary sounds like footsteps that can help to create a sense of location and space. These sounds form the Foley track which is part of the sound track .
format	A type of television programme that can be defined clearly enough to be copyrighted, bought and sold. There is a legal minefield here because it is very difficult to define a format clearly enough to prevent it being copied by another company. Examples of successful formats are <i>Big Brother</i> and <i>Who Wants to be a Millionaire</i> ?
frame, framing	Frame as a noun: the outer edge of a photograph or of the images on the screen in film or TV. As a verb ('to frame' or 'framing'): the act of deciding what is going to be included within the frame. See also close up , mid shot , long shot and wide shot . Glossaries often provide exact definitions of different types of framing (and may often call them 'shot types' or 'camera angles'). But in practice, there are no such precise definitions.
game show	A long-established TV genre which involves ordinary people or celebrities (or sometimes both) involved in a competitive event such as a quiz. Unlike reality TV , game shows have a clearly-established format and are tightly controlled by a presenter .
genre	Means type or kind. Films and TV programmes are sometimes referred to as being in a particular genre as a shorthand to indicate their style, content and narrative structure. Genres offer a pleasurable tension between the familiar and predictable, and the unexpected. Some familiar genres are westerns, musicals, thrillers, horror , romance, action movie, romantic comedy , science fiction, soap opera .
graphics	Lettering and other drawn or computer-generated shapes and images used to enhance a title sequence or convey information (eg in charts) in news and other factual programmes. Often animated .
hand held camera	Means what it says: the camera is held in the hands or on the shoulder, rather than being placed on a tripod. The effect can be more immediate and realistic, because the slightly shaky image makes you feel that you are there, looking through the viewfinder . Can also be used to suggest 'home video'. Similar, but often more spectacular, effects are achieved through the use of steadicam .

headlines	The main stories in a news bulletin that are announced briefly at the start of the programme, to attract viewers' interest.
horror	Horror films originate from the horror genre in literature and are designed to elicit fright, fear, terror, or horror from viewers. In horror film plots, evil forces, events, or characters, sometimes of supernatural origin, intrude into the everyday world.
hospital drama	Popular and long-established TV genre in which a hospital setting generates weekly excitement through a constant flow of patients with interesting ailments and injuries, but maintains viewer loyalty through the continuing dramatic relationships between hospital staff.
image	This word gets used in different ways. It can mean a still image like a photograph or a drawing, but it can also mean the visual elements of moving image media . A third, more abstract meaning is the collection of ideas we may have about a person or topic, as in for example a celebrity 'image' or in 'people's image of Africa is all about drought, war and starvation'.
lighting	Refers to lighting effects used in film and TV. It might seem to be ordinary daylight, but often powerful lamps are used to enhance the natural light. In other films, darkness might be used to create a frightening atmosphere, dull light for a depressing effect, or highly contrasted light and shadow for a dramatic effect. Animation and CGI reproduce lighting effects in the scenes they create.
live	When a TV or radio broadcast, or online event, is shown as it is actually happening. Sport and some parts of news broadcasts are usually live (as opposed to recorded).
live action	Used in contrast with animation : live action refers to the use of real people or actors in a film or programme, not drawings or puppets.
location	When a film is made in a real place, such as a street, a large country house, or on a Caribbean island, this is known as the location.
logo	The graphic mark or emblem used by companies, organizations and even individuals to aid and promote instant public recognition. The Nike 'swoop' shape and the Apple silhouetted apple shape with a bite taken out, are typical logos.
long shot	When the image is framed so as to show people and/or objects a long way away: for example a car speeding along a road in the middle of the landscape, or a person standing alone in the middle of a huge city square. Can indicate isolation, or simply reveal the physical context. Variants include 'extreme long shot', 'medium long shot', etc.
media	Plural noun (the singular is 'medium') referring to the variety of means by which print, still and moving images, recorded sounds and data can be stored and transmitted. There is much argument about what is meant by 'media' but the word is usually used to refer to film, TV, radio, press, websites, video games and sometimes also to books.
merchandising	Products that relate to a film or programme and are packaged using the same brand.
mid-shot, medium shot	When the image is framed so as to show a person or object as seen by someone else close by: a figure from the hips upwards, for example. This kind of framing is typically used in soap opera , sitcom and other naturalistic drama, as it represents a 'human' point of view.

mise en scène	French term (pronounced 'meez-ahn-sen') which literally means 'put in the scene' and refers to the decisions made by directors about what to include within the frame .
montage sequence	A series of shots which summarises an action or creates a mood, rather than showing the action in a realistic sequence. Often has a sound track of music or sound effects .
moving image media	Any media which use moving images as an important element of meaning: mainly film and television, but also video games and some online content. Misleading term because most of such media use sound as well as images .
musical	A fictional film genre that includes song and dance sequences as an apparently 'natural' part of the story.
non-diegetic sound	Sounds that do not come from within the 'world' of the film or TV programme as shown on screen: for example music that is added to create atmosphere or mood; a character's thoughts being spoken; noises added to heighten tension or signal an imminent surprise.
Ofcom	An organization in the UK which is responsible for regulating the broadcast, internet and telecoms industries (see page 52).
off screen	Action belonging to the story world, but which takes place outside the frame .
pan	When the camera turns from one side to the other, seeming to sweep across the scene. The term comes from the word panorama, meaning a wide, horizontal view.
point of view, POV	Can be used in a general sense, for example, 'the story is all told from X's point of view' but has a specific technical meaning in filming when a shot appears to show a scene as one of the characters might actually see it: hence 'point of view shot'.
presenter	A person who appears on screen in news, some documentaries and many entertainment shows, and who appears to speak directly to the audience
product placement	A company pays to have its product used or shown within a programme or film. It is not specifically mentioned, but companies hope customers will see and associate the product with actors or programmes they like or admire
product:	Anything that can be offered for sale. This could be a physical object like a pair of trainers or a packet of pasta, or it could be a set of services such as an investment package from a bank.
promotion:	Covers many ways of keeping a product in people's minds. It could include publishing press releases, writing articles for magazines or newspapers, printing a logo or product on pens, T-shirts or key-rings, mailing people about your product and so on.
props	Props is short for 'properties', meaning things belonging to the set or the actors that relate to the action. Props are sometimes very small but very significant, such as a murder weapon or a lost earring; or they can be just part of the background of a scene, like crockery and food in a kitchen scene.
prosthetics	Special additions to an actor's body to change radically what s/he looks like. For example, a false nose, a huge stomach or a complete alien's body. Facial changes are often made with latex, then blended in with the actor's face using make-up. It can take hours for an actor to be transformed by prosthetics.
public service announcement	This is like a TV advert but is not selling something. PSAs promote safe or healthy behaviour, such as driving more slowly. They may be produced by Government or by charities such as the British Heart Foundation.

ratings	The statistics provided to broadcasters about the numbers of people watching or listening to their programmes. Specialist companies collect these data by constantly sampling the audience.
reality TV	A relatively new genre of television that puts people (who can be celebrities or non-professionals) into a situation that provides them with challenges - either by making them compete with others, or by making them deal with physical or emotional situations - and provides the audience with the pleasure of seeing whether they can cope, and if so, how.
regulator	An organization set up either by an industry (eg the film industry set up the BBFC) or by Government (eg the government set up Ofcom) to make sure that the media organizations in a particular sector keep to the rules or codes of conduct agreed for that sector.
representation	A complicated term with many meanings. Here we use it to refer to the relationship between media products such as films and TV programmes, and events, people, places and ideas in the real world, which may be judged by audiences as 'realistic', 'biased', 'true', 'stereotyped', etc.
romantic comedy	A film genre that tells the story of a romance (two people - usually male and female - who eventually get together after many problems and complications) in an amusing way. Often referred to as 'romcom'.
scene	Usually used to refer to a section of a drama that takes place within one place and one continuous time-frame, often identified by its setting: for example 'the dinner-table scene' or 'the swimming pool scene'. Sometimes used almost interchangeably with sequence .
schedule	The way in which a TV or radio station or channel organises the days and times when its programmes are transmitted.
science fiction	Science fiction (abbreviated SF or sci-fi with varying punctuation and capitalization) is a broad genre of fiction that often involves speculations based on current or future science or technology. Science fiction is found in books, art, television, films, games, theatre, and other media.
sequence	Usually used to refer to a continuous series of shots that may comprise all or part of a scene, but is often identified in terms of the action that takes place: for example 'the fight sequence' or 'the chase sequence'.
serial	A story told over several episodes. Soap operas are serials but since they are designed never to end, they are called 'continuing serials'.
series	Several programmes that may be linked by the same characters and/or settings, but in which the story of each programme is separate and different, e.g. a crime series in which the same detective solves a different murder in each episode; or a documentary in which a slightly different aspect of the subject is explored in each episode.
set	The place where the action is filmed. Sets may be on location (in a real place) or specially-built rooms/scenes in a studio. Everything in the place (background, furniture, props e.g.) is part of the set.
shot	The basic unit of meaning within a moving image 'story'. A single scene may be made up of one or more shots of varying duration. A shot is usually described according to the framing and camera angle .
sitcom	A situation comedy, usually referred to as a sitcom, is a genre of comedy programmes which originated in radio. Today, sitcoms are found almost exclusively on TV as one of its major narrative forms. Sitcoms usually consist of recurring characters in a common environment such as a home or workplace.

slow motion	When filming is done much faster than normal speed, so that when it is played back, all the action seems to happen much more slowly. It can have the effect of emphasizing an action, or creating suspense, or allowing very rapid action (such as a tackle in football) to be seen more clearly.
soap opera	A soap opera is an ongoing, episodic work of fiction, usually broadcast on television or radio. Programs described as soap operas have existed as an entertainment long enough for audiences to recognize them simply by the term soap. The name <i>soap opera</i> stems from the original dramatic serials broadcast on radio that had soap manufacturers such as Procter and Gamble, Colgate-Palmolive, and Lever Brothers as the show's sponsors. Soap opera stories run concurrently, intersect, and lead into further developments.
sound effects	Sounds which cannot be recorded for real (such as an alien spaceship or someone's head being cracked by a baseball bat), but are made artificially and added to the film sound track later by the Foley artist . Sound effects include 'spot effects' (like a crash or a crack of thunder) and 'atmospheres' that are continuous background sounds like birdsong, traffic or wind. Different kinds of 'silence' are also created for films and TV, because real 'dead silence' would sound very strange. Effects like reverberation can be added to other sounds to create a sense of large or small spaces, indoors or outdoors. The process of creating elaborate sound tracks is called 'sound design'.
sound/sound track	The sound track of any film or programme can have up to four elements: speech, music, sound effects and silence (although silence in films and TV is never absolute). Each of these is meaningful and important: they can interact with each other and with the visual images to create rich and dense layers of meaning. The sound track is often more important than the 'visual track' and can lead audiences to interpret visual images in specific ways. Some documentary sound tracks may be at least partly recorded when filming, but drama sound tracks are usually added afterwards.
special effects	Sounds and visual elements in a film that are not 'real' but have been created by skilled technicians to look or sound like something that's required for the story, such as a monster, a flying house or a futuristic world. Visual effects may be created physically (e.g. with costumes and make-up) or, these days, often digitally, using computer software. Real and artificial elements can be combined, using cgi , to create scenes such as the battles in <i>Lord of the Rings</i> .
sponsorship:	When a company contributes money to help make a TV programme, an advert for their product/s appears, along with a spoken or written announcement that they are the sponsor, at the start and end of the programme and each time there is a commercial break. There's an interesting list of who sponsors Channel 4 programmes, and FAQs about why sponsors might want to give money, on this website: http://www.channel4sales.com/sponsorship/who
Steadicam	A device that enables a camera operator to hold a camera and run or jump without creating an unwatchably wobbly image. Frequently seen in use by touchline camera operators at football matches, but widely used in drama, especially in action and comedy.

stereotype	A stereotype is a simplified and/or standardized conception or image with specific meaning, often held in common by people about another group. A stereotype can be a conventional and oversimplified conception, opinion, or image, based on the assumption that there are attributes that members of the other group hold in common. Stereotypes may be positive or negative in tone. They are typically generalizations based on minimal or limited knowledge about a group to which the person doing the stereotyping does not belong. Persons may be grouped based on racial group, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, age or any number of other categories.
teleprompter	A teleprompter (also known as an autocue) is a display device that prompts the person speaking with an electronic visual text of a speech or script. Using a teleprompter is similar to the practice of using cue cards. The screen is in front of the lens of the camera, and the words on the screen are reflected to the eyes of the speaker using a one-way mirror. As the speaker does not need to look down to consult written notes, he or she appears to have memorized the speech or be speaking spontaneously, and will look directly into the camera lens.
tilt	When the camera is tilted up or down while filming, for example, starting at the bottom of a skyscraper and, from that position, gradually looking all the way up to the top.
title sequence	The opening sequence of a film or TV programme that tells you the title, and may also add images, graphics and/or music and other sound to give you an idea of what the film or programme is about.
tracking shot	A shot that seems to follow the action or move around a scene. The camera is usually mounted on a moving platform, called a dolly, or a vehicle, in order to move through the scene or follow the action as it moves.
transition	A way of changing from one shot to another. See cut , fade , dissolve/mix , wipe .
user generated content (UGC)	Photographs and video (often now from mobile phones) taken by ordinary people and sent to broadcasters in the hope that they may get used. The concept of UGC expanded dramatically after the London bombings of 7/07/05, when UGC was the only source of many key images, especially underground, and broadcasters are now inviting the public to contribute UGC, especially on websites.
viewfinder	Still and video cameras have viewfinders to help frame the image. For classroom activity, viewfinders can be made by cutting a rectangle out of the centre of a sheet of card.
watershed	9.00 pm is the time before which broadcasters are required not to show content that could be unsuitable for children, such as violence, sexual activity or strong language.
western	A genre of literature, film and TV fiction set in the American Old West between the years of 1860 and 1900, still periodically revived.
wide shot	A way of framing a shot in order to show as much as possible of the setting or context. Often used at the start of a scene or the beginning of the whole story.
wipe	A transition in which the new image appears to ‘push’ the old image off the screen, either from one side to the other, or from top to bottom, or by the insertion of an expanding shape such as a circle or star.
zoom	Change of image size that happens when the focal length of the zoom lens is altered. Something small in the distance is brought much closer and bigger (zoom-in), or vice versa (zoom-out).

